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The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin

A History of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia,
1190–1331

Translated by
Mary Fischer



ROUTLEDGE

Crusade Texts in Translation 20

CRUSADE TEXTS IN TRANSLATION

Volume 20

About the volume

This is the first English translation of the ‘Chronicle of Prussia’, which was written by Nicolaus von Jeroschin, in middle German verse, during the period from 1330 to 1341. It is a history of the Teutonic Knights, encompassing the period between the foundation of the order, in 1190, and 1331. The translator’s introduction sets the work in its historical and cultural context.

The text was written at the instigation of the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, to make an account of the ethos and history of the order’s conquest of Prussia available ‘to all German people’. Its purpose was to remind the order’s knight brothers and its supporters of its origins and past achievements, but above all it was intended to establish the legitimacy of Prussia as a locus for crusades, setting the scene for the order’s ‘golden age in the second half of the fourteenth century.

The chronicle’s content is divided into three sections: it opens with a description of the founding of the order in Acre. There follows a discourse on the nature of spiritual and earthly warfare, which echoes the ideology of crusading warfare first articulated by Bernhard of Clairvaux in his treatise *De laude novae militiae*. The final, longest, section recounts the wars of the Teutonic Knights against the Prussians and Lithuanians from 1230 until the narrative breaks off abruptly in 1331.

The chronicle is the main historical source document for the period it covers and was widely disseminated during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It is also an engaging and lively account of warfare and colonisation on the eastern frontier of Latin Christianity.

About the translator

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For Conan, Kate and Jane

THE CHRONICLE OF PRUSSIA BY
NICOLAUS VON JEROSCHIN

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A History of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia, 1190–1331

Translated by

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 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2010 by Ashgate Publishing

Published 2016 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Nicolaus, von Jeroschin, fl. 1335–1347.

The Chronicle of Prussia: A History of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia, 1190–1331.
– (Crusade Texts in Translation)

1. Teutonic Knights – Germany – Prussia – History – Early works to 1800. 2. Prussia (Germany) – History. I. Title II. Series III. Fischer, Mary.
271.7'914043–dc22

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Nicolaus, von Jeroschin, fl. 1335–1347.

[Kronike von Pruzinlant. English]

The Chronicle of Prussia: A History of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia, 1190-1331 /
by Nicolaus von Jeroschin ; [translated by] Mary Fischer.

p. cm. – (Crusade Texts in Translation ; 20)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Teutonic Knights – Germany – Prussia – History. 2. Teutonic Knights – Lithuania – History.
3. Prussia (Germany) – History, Military – Religious aspects. 4. Prussia (Germany) –
Colonization. 5. Prussia (Germany) – Church history. 6. Christianity – Germany – Prussia –
History – To 1500. 7. Lithuania – History, Military – Religious aspects. 8. Lithuania –
Colonization. 9. Lithuania – Church history. 10. Christianity – Lithuania – History – To 1500.
I. Fischer, Mary, 1954– II. Title.

PT1548.J2K713 2010

271'.7914–dc22

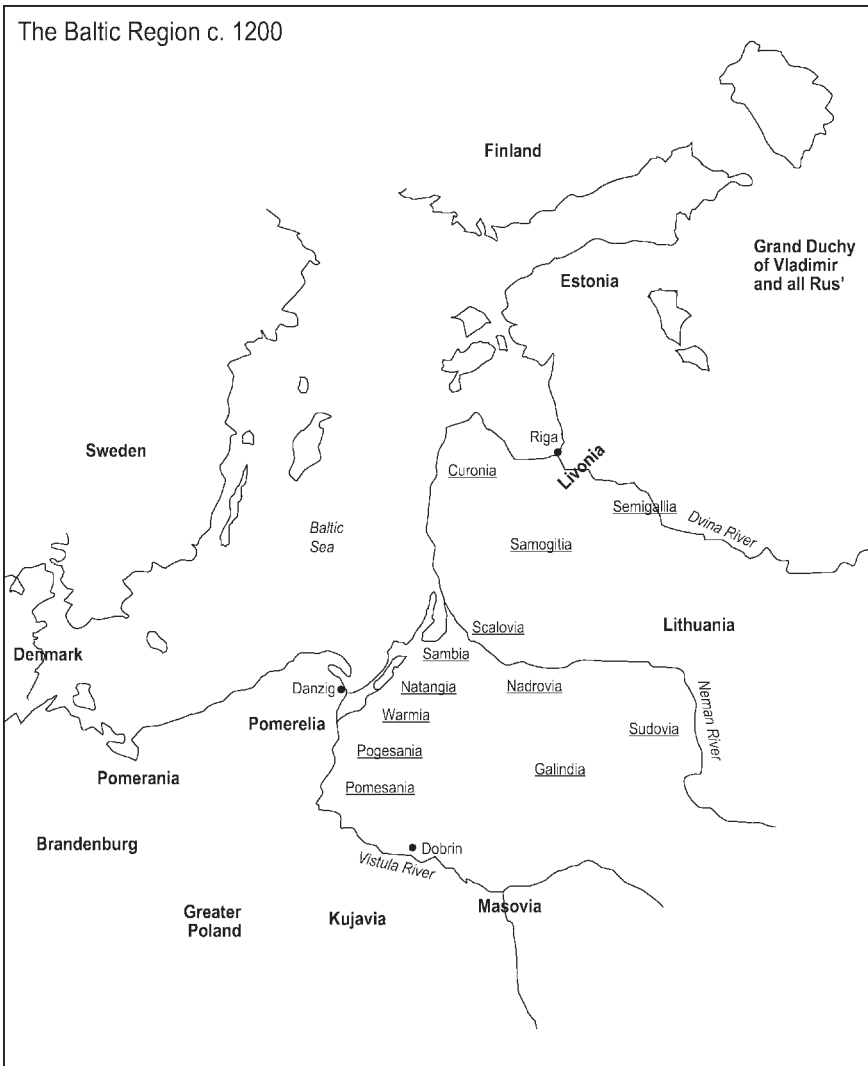
2010032126

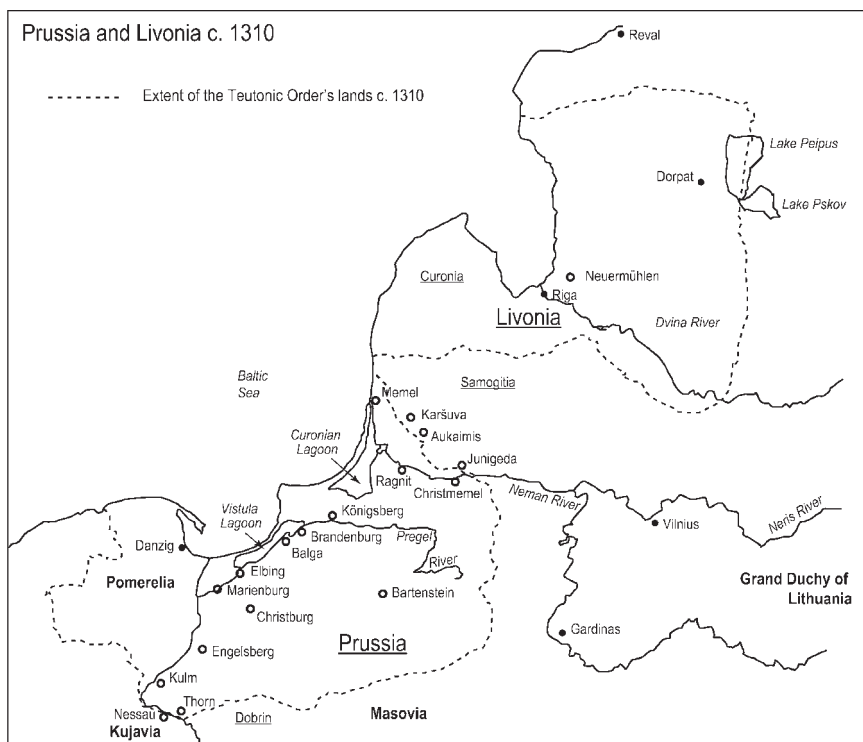
ISBN 9780754653097 (hbk)

Contents

<i>Abbreviations</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>xi</i>
Introduction	1
Translator's Note	17
Grand Masters of the Teutonic Order and Masters of Prussia	21
The Chronicle of Prussia	25
Book 1	29
Book 2	43
Book 3	67
<i>Bibliography</i>	<i>297</i>
<i>Index</i>	<i>303</i>







Abbreviations

MGH SS	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores</i> , ed. Georg Pertz (Hannover, 1826–).
PUB	<i>Preußisches Urkundenbuch</i> , ed. R. Philippi, C.P. Woelky, A. Seraphim, M. Hein, E. Maschke, H. Koeppen and K. Conrad, 5 vols (Königsberg and Marburg: Hartung and Elwert, 1882–1975).
SRP	<i>Scriptores Rerum Prussicarum. Die Geschichtsquellen der preussischen Vorzeit</i> , vols 1–5, ed. Theodor Hirsch, Max Töppen and Ernst Strehlke; vol. 6 ed. Walther Hubatsch (vols 1–5 Leipzig: Verlag von S Hirzel, 1861–74; republished Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1968; vol. 6 Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1968).
VL	<i>Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon</i> , founded by Wolfgang Stammeler, continued by Karl Langosch, ed. Kurt Ruh (Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 1977–2008).
<i>ZfdA</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum</i> .

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Acknowledgements

In spite of the fact that it is now over twenty years since the demise of the Iron Curtain, relatively little has been written in the English-speaking world about the history of the countries in Eastern Europe. The story of the Teutonic Order's conquest of the lands south of the Baltic, inhabited by the Prussians, during the thirteenth century is fascinating in its own right and its repercussions are still being felt today. I hope this translation will introduce a wider audience to the events of this time.

I am grateful to Dr Jeffrey Ashcroft for introducing me to the chronicle many years ago and for his continued support and advice. Dr John Ensor provided invaluable practical support while I was working on the translation. I am especially indebted to the anonymous readers whose careful reading of my draft enabled me to clarify many points of detail and whose comments were exceptionally helpful. Finally, grateful thanks are also due to Dr John Smedley at Ashgate, for his patience in seeing this project through to its conclusion.

Mary Fischer
August 2010

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Introduction

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, the region south of the Baltic Sea, bordered on the west by the Vistula and to the north-east by the Neman river, which we now know as northern Poland, the Kaliningrad region of Russia and western Lithuania, was inhabited by the Prussian peoples. The Prussians were Balts, an Indo-European group quite distinct from the neighbouring Germanic and Slavic peoples. They had lived in this area for at least three thousand years; two of the tribes are mentioned by Ptolemy in the second century AD. The area was covered in dense forest, and human habitation was confined for the most part to the river valleys and the coasts. The Prussians cleared land in the forests for agriculture, and traded in honey, wax and the amber which was found along the coastline.¹ In common with many of the surrounding peoples, they appear to have practised an animistic religion, worshipping trees and nature. The *Chronicle of Prussia* is an account of the wars carried on during the thirteenth century to convert the Prussians to Christianity. These wars had the status of crusades and were conducted by the Teutonic Order, a military order which was established in the Holy Land at the end of the twelfth century.

The Historical Background to the Crusades in Prussia

The crusades against the Prussians, which lasted until 1283, were the final phase in a period of conquest, Christianisation and colonisation which had been taking place in northern and eastern Europe for at least the previous 200 years.² From the late tenth century the peoples inhabiting the lands on the southern Baltic, to the west of the Vistula, collectively known as the Wends, had come under increasing pressure from neighbouring powers: German princes, the Danish kings, and the Polish kings and dukes, as they competed to extend their influence. By 1100 at the latest these campaigns were loosely understood as crusades. By the 1140s a pattern had been established whereby armed raids subdued new territory, forts

¹ For a modern account of these peoples, see Marija Gimbutas, *The Balts*, Ancient peoples and places, 33 (London: Thames and Hudson, 1963).

² Until quite recently, relatively little had been written in English on the Baltic crusades. For a detailed and authoritative overview of the Christianisation of northern Europe see Eric Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades* (London, 1997). See also Alan V. Murray (ed.), *Crusade and Conversion on the Baltic Frontier 1150–1500* (Aldershot, 2001) and Alan V. Murray (ed.), *The Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier* (Aldershot, 2009) and William Urban, *The Baltic Crusade* (Dekalb, 1975; revised 2nd edition Chicago, 1994).

were built to control the area and then colonists and missionaries were brought in to exploit the area and convert the locals.¹

What is generally regarded as the first formal crusade in the region took place in 1147, when Pope Eugenius III authorised an attack by the Danes and Saxons on the Abotrites, the pagan Wends who lived on their borders. This set a precedent whereby the wars on pagan neighbours in this area could be placed on the same footing as the crusades to the Holy Land. Campaigns against the Wends continued until 1185. When the western part of the southern Baltic region had been Christianised and colonised, the focus of the new crusading movement moved east of the Vistula to the Balts and Finnic peoples who lived there: the Prussians, Lithuanians, Livs, Letts, Estonians and Curonians.

The first to be targeted were the Livs, and missionary activity in this area began in the region of the mouth of the Dvina river in the mid 1180s. In 1200 Albert von Buxhövdén set up a bishopric at Riga and established a military order known as the Sword Brothers. Under the leadership of this order, successive waves of crusaders were able to conquer the local peoples. The northern Estonians were conquered by the Danes and finally the Sword Brothers subdued the Curonians to the south, so that by 1231 the borders of what came to be called Livonia had been established.

In the meantime, a move towards Christianising the remaining pagan peoples on the southern Baltic, the Prussians, was also beginning to gather pace. The earliest attempts to Christianise the Prussians had taken place as far back as the end of the tenth century. Adalbert of Prague was sent as a missionary by Pope Gregory V (972–999), with the support of Bolesław I of Poland, but he was killed by the Prussians shortly after his arrival in 997. A second mission, led by Bruno of Querfurt, also ended in martyrdom in 1009. It was not until 200 years later that concerted attempts were made to convert the Prussians to Christianity. The man entrusted with this mission, Bishop Christian, was a Pomeranian by birth and a member of the Cistercian Order.² He arrived in Prussia in 1206, six years after Albert had settled in Livonia. He had the support of the pope, Innocent III, and military backing was initially provided by the king of Denmark, Valdemar II (1170–1241) and later by Duke Conrad of Masovia.³ However, after initial success, which had made possible the establishment of a bishopric in 1215, the Prussians began to rebel against Christian encroachment on their land and way of life. The bishop was unable to consolidate his hold on the area round Kulm (Chełmno), which was to be the seat of his bishopric, and had to leave Prussia.

¹ See Christiansen, *Northern Crusades*, pp. 27–34.

² For a detailed account of Christian's career in Prussia, see Hubert Zenon Nowak, 'Milites Christi de Prussia. Der Orden von Dobrin und seine Stellung in der preußischen Mission', in Josef Fleckenstein and Manfred Hellman (eds), *Die Geistlichen Ritterorden Europas* (Sigmaringen, 1980), pp. 339–52.

³ Conrad I of Masovia (1187–1247) became duke of Masovia in 1199 and of neighbouring Kujavia in 1202.

In 1228, he and Conrad jointly established the Order of Dobrin, a military order modelled on Albert of Riga's Sword Brothers, to provide a permanent garrison in the area. At the same time negotiations appear to have begun to bring the Teutonic Order to Prussia to lead the crusade. This order was not in a position to take up the offer at that time, since it was committed to supporting the Emperor Frederick II's much delayed crusade to the Holy Land. It was not until this crusade had finally taken place, in 1228, that the order was in a position to send its first expeditionary force into Prussia. The intervention of the Teutonic Order proved to be the decisive turning point in the campaign to convert and subdue the Prussians, and marked the beginning of more than fifty years of crusading in Prussia under its leadership.

The Early History of the Teutonic Order and Its Arrival in Prussia

The Teutonic Order had been founded more than one hundred years previously. It began as a field hospital in 1190 in Acre during the Third Crusade, established by merchants from Bremen and Lübeck. It was made a military order shortly afterwards, in 1198, at an extraordinary gathering of princes from Germany, almost certainly with the aim of strengthening Hohenstaufen strategy in the Mediterranean. Emperor Henry VI had been crowned king of the kingdom of Sicily in 1194,¹ and although he died in 1197 and did not take part in the crusade, he had already given the hospital lands in Barletta and Palermo. The new order was confirmed by Pope Innocent III the following year.² For the next 50 years, during the period of its rapid growth, the order's fortunes were closely allied to those of the Hohenstaufen dynasty.

In 1209, ten years after the establishment of the order, the Thuringian *ministerialis* Hermann von Salza became grand master.³ He is portrayed by the chroniclers as a gifted and successful diplomat who cultivated a role as mediator between Emperor Frederick II (1194–1250) and the papacy. He used the influence he gained to establish the order's independence from the two older orders, the Templars and the Hospitallers, and to build up holdings of land both in the Holy Land and in Europe. From the outset, he appears to have been trying to find a territory which the order could control in its own right. His first, abortive, attempt to do this was in the Burzenland.⁴ The order had been invited here in 1211 by

¹ Henry VI had married Constance of Sicily, the sole legitimate heir of King William II of Sicily in 1286. He had been crowned king of Sicily in December 1194 after the death of Tancred of Lecce, who had disputed his claim and had had the support of the southern Italian barons, and was in the process of consolidating his hold on the kingdom.

² For a detailed account of the order's early years and its acquisition of lands outside the Holy Land, see Udo Arnold (ed.), *Die Hochmeister des Deutschen Ordens 1190–1994* (Marburg, 1998), pp. 4–11.

³ See Arnold (ed.), *Hochmeister*, pp. 12–16.

⁴ South eastern Transylvania, now part of Romania.

King Andrew II of Hungary (1177–1235). King Andrew gave the order the task of defending the eastern borders of Hungary against the Cumans, a nomadic Turkish people, who were attacking Transylvania during this period. It carried out this task so effectively that both the king and local magnates became alarmed by its success and evident territorial ambitions and it was finally forced to leave the Burzenland in 1225.¹

As a result of this set-back, from 1226 at the latest Hermann was engaged in discussions with Frederick II and Conrad of Masovia about the possibility of establishing a similar venture in Prussia. A number of factors combined to make this an appealing option. Firstly, crusading in the Baltic had become an even more attractive proposition since Honorius III became pope in 1216.² His papacy gave renewed impetus to mission work and conversion and he was the first pope to send a legate to the Baltic. William of Modena arrived in 1224 and was involved in plans to promote the crusade there. Secondly, the Prussian attacks on Masovia and Kujavia were increasingly diverting Conrad's energies away from Polish dynastic struggles, and the Knights of Dobrin were seemingly unable to hold them in check. Finally, the order was able to use the lessons it had learned in the Burzenland. Hermann von Salza approached this new enterprise much more cautiously. He negotiated autonomy for the order in the lands it conquered, and had the terms documented by Conrad in the Treaty of Kruszwica, in which the duke and all third parties renounced their claims to these territories. Frederick II had already given his support to the conquest of Prussia by the order in 1226. Pope Gregory IX confirmed these agreements in 1234, placing the Kulmerland and all as yet unconquered lands under the direct over-lordship of the pope, to whom alone the order was to be responsible. Finally, the emperor issued the Golden Bull of Rimini in 1235 (although his chancery predated it to 1226) giving his sanction to the Prussian venture. With these safeguards and guarantees in place, Hermann initiated a period of conquest and settlement which continued until the Prussians were finally subdued in the last years of the thirteenth century. It is the account of these wars which the order recorded in the *Kronike von Pruzinlant*.

The *Kronike von Pruzinlant*

The chronicle was written after the completion of the Prussian crusade, in the decade from 1331 to 1341, by Nicolaus von Jeroschin, a chaplain in the Teutonic Order. It was a translation and expanded version of a Latin chronicle, the *Chronicon Terrae*

¹ See William Urban, *The Teutonic Knights. A Military History* (London, 2003), pp. 31–7.

² Honorius III was pope from 1216 to 1227. For an account of his role see Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt, 'Pope Honorius III and Missions and Crusades in the Baltic Region', in A.V. Murray (ed.), *The Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 103–22.

Prussiae, written between 1326 and 1331 by Peter von Dusburg, who was also a priest in the order.¹ Dusburg's chronicle had been commissioned by the order's grand master, who at that time was Werner von Orseln (1324–30). Jeroschin's translation was commissioned immediately after the original had been written, by the next grand master, Luder von Braunschweig (1331–35), and finished during the period of office of his successor, Dietrich von Altenburg (1335–41).²

The Author

Little is known about Nicolaus von Jeroschin, the author of the *Kronike von Pruzinlant*, other than what he himself tells us in the chronicle. His birthplace has been variously postulated as Prussia, Thuringia or Saxony, with the most recent research favouring Prussia. His date of birth is thought to have been around 1290, since eye-witness accounts of events occur in the chronicle from 1311.³ Further speculation in the nineteenth century about the extent of his knowledge of the language of the common people has led to suggestions that he may have come from a relatively humble background.⁴ He himself only says that he speaks German, as he learned it as a child, and that his language has no claims to courtly refinement (p. 28). This in itself is likely to be a conventional affirmation of humility and need not be taken at face value. As well as the chronicle, Jeroschin also wrote a life of St Adalbert, the first Prussian martyr.⁵ In this, he tells us that he became a member of the Teutonic Order under Gottfried von Heimberg, who was commander of Königsberg from 1326 to 1329.⁶ He describes himself as a chaplain during the time that Dietrich von Altenburg was grand master (p. 27). It has been conjectured that at the time of writing the chronicle he was quite old, for the not

¹ Peter von Dusburg, *Chronicon Terre Prussie*, ed. Max Toeppen, SRP, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1861), pp. 3–219; translated into German and annotated by Klaus Scholz and Dieter Wojtecki as *Chronik des Preussenlandes*, *Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters* 25 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984).

² The only full modern edition of the chronicle is the edition by Ernst Strehlke, SRP, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1861), pp. 291–624.

³ See Ernst Strehlke's introduction to the chronicle in SRP vol 1, pp. 293–4; Nicolaus von Jeroschin, *Die Deutschordenschronik. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der mitteldeutschen Sprache und Literatur*, ed. Franz Pfeiffer (Stuttgart: F. Köhler, 1854; reprographically reproduced Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966), pp. xxi–xxiii; Udo Arnold, *VL* (1987), vol 6, 1081–9.

⁴ See Nicolaus von Jeroschin, *Die Deutschordenschronik*, pp. xxiii–xxiv.

⁵ Only a fragment survives in Ernst Strehlke (ed.), SRP, vol. 2, pp. 423–8.

⁶ See Johannes Voigt, 'Über eine bisher unbekannte dichterische Bearbeitung der Lebensbeschreibung des hl. Adalbert vom Ordenskaplan Nicolaus von Jeroschin', *Neue Preußische Provinzial-Blätter*, 3, no. 7 (1861), pp. 329–36.

entirely convincing reason that he appears to have been bald. In a much-quoted passage he relates an anecdote about a brother whose hair is miraculously restored and comments that he wishes he too could benefit from a similar miracle: 'I would stroke my curls and mock the other bald men, when as often happens, the wind blows their hats off in front of the ladies. My, I would be haughty, seeing their bald brows while my own hair was luxuriant and curly!' (p. 214). Like the facts of his life, the date of his death is also a matter for conjecture. His supplement to Dusburg's text recounts events up to 1331. He was still alive when Luder von Braunschweig died in 1335 and lived to see the completion of the restoration of the chapel in the Marienburg in the early 1340s, if not its actual consecration in 1344. The fact that there is no reference to the death of Dietrich von Altenburg, and the abrupt ending of the chronicle, have been taken to indicate that he died while still completing it, probably in 1341.

The nineteenth-century editors of Dusburg's and Jeroschin's text tended to dismiss the latter as of little importance, as a mere translation of the Latin. However, as discussed below, his version of the work was by far the more influential during the fourteenth century and beyond. The translation was written for the knight brothers in the order who could not read Latin, and with them in mind, Jeroschin omitted, changed or expanded sections of Dusburg's text as he saw fit. Much of what he omitted concerns religious and ecclesiastical detail, which he evidently judged to be superfluous for his readership.¹ His text is lively and vivid, and his command of the language belies his modest claims: his first editor, Franz Pfeiffer, suggested that the richness of his language is perhaps only exceeded by that of Wolfram von Eschenbach.² In his study of Jeroschin's vocabulary, Evald Johannsson established that by far the largest number of loan or foreign words in Jeroschin's vocabulary is taken from French, and that, perhaps surprisingly in a work written by a priest for a military order, most of these relate to the vocabulary of courtly and chivalric life. This was undoubtedly a conscious strategy on Jeroschin's part to make the chronicle more accessible to his intended audience, the knight brothers in the order and the pilgrims.³ The chronicle is written in rhyme. Jeroschin follows the example of an earlier poet in the order, Heinrich von Hesler, in discussing the number of syllables per line and the purity of his rhymes: Hesler stipulates six to eight syllables per line,⁴ while Jeroschin decides on six to nine (p. 27). Helm and Ziesemer attribute these detailed explanations to the fact that verse was becoming less fashionable,

¹ For a detailed description of these differences see Walther Ziesemer, *Nicolaus von Jeroschin und seine Quelle* (Berlin, 1907).

² Nicolaus von Jeroschin, *Die Deutschordenschronik*, p. xvii.

³ Evald Johannsson, *Die Deutschordenschronik des Nicolaus von Jeroschin. Eine sprachliche Untersuchung mit komparativer Analyse der Wortbildung* (Lund, 1964).

⁴ Heinrich von Hesler, *Die Apokalypse Heinrichs von Hesler aus der Danziger Handschrift*, ed. Karl Helm (Berlin, 1907), line 1,054.

and therefore more mechanical, at the time of writing.¹ As masters of their craft, perhaps both Hesler and Jeroschin felt the need to share their techniques with less gifted practitioners.

The Content of the Chronicle

The chronicle covers the period from the order's inauguration in 1190 until the first decades of the fourteenth century, ending abruptly in 1331. Jeroschin omits Dusburg's introduction. Instead, his chronicle begins with an address to the Trinity (lines 1–86). The following section establishes the reasons for writing the chronicle and how he went about the task (lines 87–330). Using the biblical precedent of Daniel in the lions' den as its basis, it describes Dietrich von Altenburg's desire to record the similar 'signs and miracles' God has performed in Prussia through the agency of the order. Jeroschin acknowledges Peter von Dusburg and his own patrons Dietrich von Altenburg and Luder von Braunschweig and then introduces himself, with a prayer to the Virgin Mary for inspiration. The next part of this section discusses the rhyme scheme and finally the overall structure of the chronicle.

The next section is a translation of Dusburg's Book I and describes the origins of the order and its history up to 1230 (lines 331–1,497). It recounts the order's origins and establishes its credentials as a crusading military order, listing the biblical precedents for warfare in the name of the church. This section culminates in a passage describing the wars of the Maccabees, whose successors the order claims to be. It goes on to describe the new order's tentative early days in the Holy Land, and in particular its links with the Hohenstaufen dynasty.

Book II (lines 1,498–3,670) describes the order's arrival in Prussia and the model for the conduct of its wars. The first part of this section describes the diplomatic manoeuvrings of Grand Master Hermann von Salza. Papal and imperial protection was central to the order's success in the following century. It also describes in detail the basis of the order's later claim to the lands it conquered, laying the basis for the order's future development.

The second part of this section is a justification of warfare on behalf of the church. It has clear parallels with Bernard of Clairvaux's justification of the Templars in the twelfth century, the epistle *'de laude novae militiae'*,² and is based on St Paul's words in Ephesians 6, in which he sets out the spiritual 'armour of God'. The identification of weapons with virtues, which gives the battle against the heathen its spiritual authority, and the order in which the weapons are introduced, also mirror the order's own ritual for accepting new knights. This section also serves

¹ Karl Helm and Walther Zieseemer, *Die Literatur des deutschen Ritterordens* (Giessen: Wilhelm Schmitz Verlag, 1951), pp. 90–91.

² See J. Leclercq and H.M. Rochais (eds), 'Liber ad milites Templi de laude novae militiae', in *S. Bernardi Opera*, vol. 3 (Rome, 1963), 206–39.

the purpose of legitimising the wars in Prussia by linking them unequivocally to the early, uncompromising, crusading tradition.

Book III (lines 3,671–26,655) describes the wars against the Prussians, and latterly against the Lithuanians, until 1326. Here too, the chroniclers are careful to demonstrate the justification for the wars. Campaigns are prefaced by a description of the enemies' opposition to the church and the atrocities they have committed against Christians. The chronicle draws on the themes of crusading propaganda and preaching throughout the Middle Ages and its heritage can be traced as far back as the accounts of the speech of Urban II in 1095. Comparisons of passages in the chronicle with Robert the Monk's version of the pope's description of the sack of Jerusalem, for example, demonstrate the persistence of crusading ideas and their continued relevance for the order at a time when the rest of Christendom was moving to a far more complex and relativised view of war against the infidel:

... a foreign people and a people rejected by God ... has invaded the lands of those Christians, depopulated them by slaughter and plunder and arson, kidnapped some of the Christians and carried them off to their own lands and put others to a wretched death.... They throw down the altars after soiling them with their own filth, circumcise Christians, and pour the resulting blood either on the altars or onto the baptismal vessels. When they feel like inflicting a truly painful death on someone they pierce their navels, pull out the end of their intestines, tie them to a pole and whip them round it, until, all their bowels pulled out, they fall lifeless to the ground.... And what can I say of the appalling treatment of women, which it is better to pass over in silence than dwell on in detail?¹

The descriptions in the *Kronike von Pruzinlant* are strikingly similar. Accounts of atrocities containing the same elements: the desecration of churches, the killing of the clergy, murder, rape and enslavement, in varying configurations, preface the wars against the Prussians (p. 44), Duke Swantopelk of Pomerelia (p. 89) and the Lithuanians (p. 256ff.).

Victories achieved during the course of campaigning are the gift of God, and a sign of His approval. Conversely, on the occasions when serious setbacks are recorded, they are mitigated by reassurances that the fallen warriors have achieved the eternal salvation promised to all crusaders: a further legitimisation of the order and equally a source of reassurance for cautious potential pilgrims. Defeats are often predicted in advance by hermits or others, as further proof that they are part of God's plan.

¹ Robert the Monk's *History of the First Crusade, Historia Iherosolimitana*, trans. Carol Sweetenham, *Crusade Texts in Translation* 11 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 79–80. Sweetenham points to the evidence that this particular account of the crusade was widely disseminated in Germany. The anecdote concerning the evisceration of captives is repeated in the *Magdeburger Aufruf* of 1108 and also reappears in the *Kronike von Pruzinlant*. See Sweetenham, pp. viii and 7, and the present translation, p. 117.

The chronicle is also revealing in its depiction of the practicalities of warfare. It makes clear the importance to the order of control of the rivers and waterways, the main trading arteries and quickest means of supplying their garrisons in outlying fortresses, and describes the construction of the fortresses and the weaponry used on campaign. Because of the nature of the terrain, major campaigns had to be carried on during the winter, when the lakes and marshland were frozen. Jeroschin gives several accounts of occasions when large numbers of crusaders had to be sent home because the winter was either too mild for fighting or too harsh for pilgrims unaccustomed to the rigours of the Baltic winter. This was not simply an inconvenience. On one occasion Jeroschin expresses a hope that the intention to take part in a crusade would be sufficient to fulfil the crusading vow: the supply of crusaders was essential to gaining and maintaining control of their territories and crusaders' expectations evidently had to be nurtured carefully (p. 129). In addition to the fulfilment of their vows, the possibility of rich spoils in the form of booty for participants evidently played a significant role in satisfying pilgrims' aspirations and the order's day-to-day needs. The campaigns were also a rite of passage for many young men who were knighted after their success fighting in the Prussian and Lithuanian campaigns. This would have been a significant accolade for a young nobleman.

Dusburg's Book IV, which relates contemporary events outside Prussia, is integrated by Jeroschin at appropriate points into the text of his Book III. Jeroschin introduces these sections as 'digressions' from the main thrust of the chronicle. The chronicle ends with a translation of the Supplement to Dusburg's chronicle (lines 26,688–27,581, covering the years 1327–30). The final section (lines 27,583–738) describes events in 1331 and appears to have been composed by Jeroschin on his own initiative.

Sources

While the chronicle formed the basis of much of the later historical writing about Prussia, its own sources are more difficult to pin down. Jeroschin frequently begins a passage with the words 'as I have heard' or 'as I have been told' and it is probable that much of the third section of the chronicle, which deals with the campaigns, was based on eye-witness accounts of the more recent events and on the oral tradition in the order. Nonetheless some pages are demonstrably based on earlier sources. The account of the origins of the order is taken from the account in the prologue of the order's statutes.¹ This in turn was based on the account contained in the anonymous contemporary document *Narratio de primordiis ordinis Theutonici*.² The chronicle also appears to have used this document for extra detail. The account

¹ *Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens*, ed. Max Perlach (Halle: Niemeyer, 1890; republished Hildesheim: Olms, 1975), Prolog, pp. 22–6.

² Ed. Walther Hubatsch, SRP, vol. 6 (Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1968), pp. 22–9.

of the order's early history in Prussia is largely based on the document traditionally known as *Hermann von Salza Bericht über die Eroberung Preussens*.¹ It was written in the mid thirteenth century and deals with the events surrounding the order's summons to Prussia and the wars against Duke Swantopelk of Pomerelia until 1346. Hermann von Salza died in 1239 and this account is now attributed to Grand Master Heinrich von Hohenlohe. It is the source of the weapon allegory (lines 2,274–3,057) and the ethnographic account of the Prussians (lines 3,738–4,264). The chroniclers also used the *Hartmann von Helldrunge's Bericht über die Vereinigung des Schwertbrüderordens mit dem Deutschen Orden* for the account of the incorporation of the Sword Brothers into the Teutonic Order in 1237² and had access to the order's annals for the dates of the grand masters and also for treaties such as the Charter of Kruszwica. Jeroschin refers in the text to a lost work, Gerstenberg's *Ottergedicht* (p. 280). He also explicitly says that he himself witnessed some of the events of chronicle and this becomes evident, particularly towards the end, when he frequently expands or makes alterations to the original.

The main sources for the events in the fourth section are the Dominicans Bartholomew of Lucca and Martinus Polonus.³ Bartholomew of Lucca's two main works are his *Annals*, which chronicles the history of the world from 1060 until 1303, and, the more important source for the chronicle, his *Historia Ecclesiastica Nova*,⁴ which covers the history of the church in 24 volumes from the birth of Christ until 1294, with appendices covering the period up to 1314. Martinus Polonus is best known for his compendium of imperial and church history entitled *Chronica Pontificum et Imperatorum*.⁵ Dusburg used the second edition of this work, which traces imperial history as far as 1315 and papal history up to 1320.

The Dissemination of the *Kronike von Pruzinlant*

The surviving manuscript evidence suggests that Jeroschin's chronicle was widely disseminated during the fourteenth century, in the period directly after it was written. The earliest surviving manuscript, which is also the most complete and the best, originated in Prussia and dates from the mid fourteenth century. It is now held in the Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart but prior to this is thought to have been in the possession of the order's library in Mergentheim, where the headquarters were moved in 1525. A further complete manuscript, formerly in

¹ Ed. Max Toeppen, SRP, vol. 5, pp. 159–72.

² Ed. Max Toeppen, SRP, vol. 5, pp. 153–68.

³ Known in German as Martin von Troppau.

⁴ *Historia ecclesiastica nova: nebst Fortsetzungen bis 1329/Tholomeus von Lucca*, ed. Ottavio Clavuot, MHG SS 39 (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2009).

⁵ Martinus Polonus, *Chronica Pontificum et Imperatorum*, ed. Ludwig Weiland, *Martini Oppaviensis chronicon pontificum et imperatorum*, MGH SS 22 (1872), pp. 377–475.

Königsberg and now in Toruń, dates from the end of the fourteenth century. Five later complete manuscripts also survive, dating from the early fifteenth century to 1702. In addition there are seven collections of surviving fragments of other manuscripts dating from the period from c. 1345 to 1400.¹ Ironically, Jeroschin's chronicle was translated back into Latin by a cleric in the order at the instigation of the Polish historian Jan Długosz (1415–80) in the second half of the fifteenth century. Excerpts from Jeroschin are also prominent in other chronicles dating from the fifteenth century. By contrast, the earliest surviving manuscript of Dusburg's Latin chronicle dates from 1568 and it is not until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that it is widely used as a source.

The two complete fourteenth-century manuscripts form the basis of the only complete modern edition of Jerschin's chronicle, edited by Ernst Strehlke and published in 1861. This edition is the basis of the current translation.

The Purpose of the Chronicle

The commissioning of the two chronicles detailing the order's origins and its wars against the Prussians in part reflects the fact that the order's initial crusades in Prussia had drawn to a close in 1283 and that the order was now in the process of

¹ The complete manuscripts are: 1. Stuttgart Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Cod. HB V 95 (dated between 1335 and 1350); 2. Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu, Rps 54/III Nicolaus von Jeroschin, *Di Kronike von Pruzinlant*. Rękopis w języku niemieckim (previously Königsberger Staatsbibliothek, Ms. Fol. 1547, dated to the second half of the fourteenth century); 3. Heidelberg Universitätsbibliothek, Cpg 467 (dated 1415); 4. Dresden Landesbibliothek, Mscr. G 38a (mid fifteenth century); 5. Gdańsk, Biblioteka Gdańska Polskiej Akademii Nauk (BGPAN), Ms 1261 (dated 1572); 6. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, mgf 984 (dated 1601); 7. Munich, Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 233 (dated 1702). The fragments are: 1. Linz, Landesarchiv, Buchdeckelfunde Sch. 3, II/4k (dated before the middle of the fourteenth century); 2. A collection of scattered fragments of a ms: Amberg, Staatsarchiv, Hss.-Fragm. 33; Amberg Staatsarchiv, Hss.-Fragm. 44; Amberg Staatsarchiv no details (lost); Annaberg-Buchholz (Erzgebirge), Kirchenbibliothek St Anna, no details; Berlin Staatsbibliothek, mgf 725; Freiberg (Sachsen), Andreas-Möller-Bibliothek of the Geschwister-Scholl-Gymnasium, no details; Munich, Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 5249/24b; Nuremberg, Germanistisches Nationalmuseum, Hs. 120873 (all second half of the fourteenth century); 3. Munich, Staatsbibliothek Cgm 5249/61m; 4. Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu, Rps 251/III; 5. Berlin, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kultur Besitz, XX. HA Hs. 34, Bd. 4 (all second half of the fourteenth century); 6. Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku, 492/656, 492/657 and 492/658 (all fourteenth century); 7. Strasbourg, Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg, ms. 2204 (c. 1400). For a discussion of the mss, see Udo Arnold, ²VL 6 (1987), columns 1081–9 and ²VL 11 (2004) column 1053; Ulrich Bartels and Jürgen Wolf, 'Neues zur Überlieferung der 'Kronike von Pruzinlant' des Nicolaus von Jeroschin', *ZdfA*, 127 (1998): pp. 299–306.

consolidating and establishing itself as the administrative power in the conquered lands.

However, the chronicle cannot simply be read as the account of a good job well done in Prussia. It also has to be understood in context of the situation the order faced at the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries: the loss of the Holy Land, the resulting attacks on the military orders, and disputes with neighbouring powers who were contesting the legitimacy of the order's actions, any of which might reasonably have been seen by contemporaries as posing a threat to the order's continued existence.

The end of the wars against the Prussians coincided almost exactly with the loss of the Holy Land to the Christians in 1291. As a result of the loss of Acre, the order's headquarters were removed first to Venice and then, in 1309, to the Marienburg (Malbork) in the order's territories in Prussia. From then on, Prussia was the centre of the order's operations until its secularisation in 1525. This retrenchment took place amid general criticism of the military orders for the failure of the crusades, the dispossession of the Templars and the demands of Philip IV of France that all military orders should be abolished and a new one instituted under his control. The decision to establish the order well out of reach of the centres of power in western Europe was undoubtedly influenced by these factors.

However, even the order's position in north-eastern Europe was not unproblematic at this time. The order was under attack from neighbouring Christians who resented its growing power and control of trade. A dispute with the citizens of Riga, which began in 1292, led to the order being involved in litigation at the curia in 1303, 1306 and in 1310. The archbishop of Riga, Friedrich von Pernstein,¹ was able to persuade Pope Clement V to instigate an investigation of the Teutonic Order under Francis of Moliano in 1312, as a result of which the knight brothers in Riga were briefly excommunicated. During the course of this dispute, the citizens called on the support of the pagan Lithuanian Grand Prince Vytenis (d. 1315) who destroyed the order's castle in Riga and did further damage in raids from 1297 to 1299.

The Poles also allied themselves with the heathen rather than accept the order's dominance in the region. The order was in dispute with Poland over the possession of Pomerelia, which it had annexed in 1309, a dispute which continued until its resolution by the curia in the order's favour in 1333. The Polish King Władysław Łokietek (1261–1333) found an ally in Vytenis's successor, grand duke Gediminas (1275–1341). During the period from 1322 to 1324, Gediminas briefly turned the tables on the crusaders, allowing the pope to believe he intended to convert to Christianity. Had he done so, he would have removed the order's final pagan opponents and hence its whole legitimacy in the region.² This was the immediate

¹ Friedrich von Pernstein was archbishop from 1304 to 1341. He spent much of this time in Avignon, raising lawsuits against the order. See S.C. Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending. A Pagan Empire within East-central Europe 1295–1345* (Cambridge, 1994) pp. 14–15.

² See Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, pp. 189–228.

political context in which Dusburg's chronicle and Jeroschin's translation were written.

In addition to this political turmoil, there were also problems within the order itself. There is evidence of serious disputes within the order about where its energies should be focused as the situation in the Holy Land worsened. These intensified after the loss of Montfort, its headquarters there, in 1271. The decision to move the headquarters to Prussia was also controversial. Many local commanders in Prussia appear to have been resentful at the threat to their independence after 1309. Grand Master Karl von Trier, who held office from 1311 to 1324, was unable to assert control over Prussia and spent his final years in Germany. His successor, Werner von Orseln, was the first grand master to be based in Prussia for the whole of his period in the office, but his tenure was brought to a premature end when he was murdered by a disaffected member of the order. Morale was low and discipline precarious. These problems are suppressed in the chronicle, since its purpose is to glorify the order, not give substance to the criticisms of it, but there are nonetheless tantalising hints at the inner turmoil.

Within this context, the loss of confidence both in the crusading movement and the military orders' role in it, and the Teutonic Order's own local problems, the purpose of the chronicles appears to have been threefold. First and foremost they were a straightforward record of order's history and achievements in Prussia, albeit a selective one, which served the order's very specific purposes. Second, they were to be used as a resource for educating and informing opinion. The Latin original would have been intended as a resource for establishing its legitimacy to outsiders, for example in any future disputes with the curia. As the editors of the modern German translation of Dusburg's chronicle point out, the title 'Chronicle' was given to the texts at a later date. Dusburg refers to his text as a 'book' (*liber*), suggesting a much more ambitious project than the mere chronicling of events.¹ Jeroschin's vernacular version was undoubtedly intended as a means of educating members and potential crusaders in the order's ethos and worldview. Third, the clear references and links to the themes and concerns of earlier crusading propaganda and the restatement of the nature and legitimacy of crusading war and the military order constitute a blueprint for the continuation of crusading warfare in the changed circumstances of the fourteenth century.

The Role of Vernacular Literature in the Teutonic Order in the Early Thirteenth Century

Jeroschin's chronicle is not the only German-language text to have been written or commissioned by the order at this point in its history. The military orders were unique in that the majority of their members were knights, not priests, and were illiterate, in the sense of being unable to read Latin. This led to a great demand for

¹ Peter von Dusburg, *Chronik des Preussenlandes*, p. 1.

devotional and inspirational texts which were accessible to these men, either for personal study or as a source of reading at meal times. Provision for these readings was made in the order's statutes.¹ During the first third of the fourteenth century the order's leadership appears to have responded to this need by disseminating, commissioning or writing a large number of texts in the vernacular, of which the chronicle is only one.² In addition to the chronicle, Jeroschin also wrote a life of St Adalbert, as noted above, presumably to supplement the *Passional*,³ a collection of lives of the saints which does not contain a reference to this key figure in Prussia's martyrology. Jeroschin's patron, Luder von Braunschweig, also wrote a life of St Barbara, the patron of Prussia, which is now lost, as part of the same process of establishing Prussia as a locus of Christian endeavour. The order became closely associated with the *Passional* and the *Väterbuch*,⁴ an account of the lives of the church fathers, because they were widely disseminated in the order's territory. It is also associated with translations of the books of Judith, and Esther, both of which date from the second half of the thirteenth century, Nicodemus and the Apocalypse, dating from the end of the thirteenth century, and the books of the Maccabees, Daniel, Ezra and Nehemia and Job, all of which were written in the 1330s, at the same time as the chronicle.⁵ Other, devotional, works were written, sent to or commissioned by the order during the same period.⁶ Thus Jeroschin's text has to be seen as part of a conscious process of the education of all those with an interest in Prussia and the spiritual re-invigoration of the knight members which the order was undertaking at this time.

¹ *Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens*, ed. Max Perlach (Halle: Niemeyer, 1890; republished Hildesheim: Olms, 1975), Regel 13, p. 41.

² See Arno Mentzel-Reuters, *Bibliotheken, Bücher und Bildung im Deutschen Orden* (Wiesbaden, 2003).

³ *Das Alte Passional*, ed. K. A. Hahn (Frankfurt a. M. 1845), Books I and II, and *Das Passional*, ed. F. K Köpke, Bibliothek der deutschen Nationalliteratur I, 35 (Quedlinburg/Leipzig, 1852; reprinted Amsterdam, 1966).

⁴ *Das Väterbuch aus der Leipziger, Hildesheimer und Straßburger Handschrift*, ed. Karl Reissenberger (Berlin, 1914; reprinted Dublin/Zurich, 1967).

⁵ *Judith*, ed. Hans-Georg Richert (Tübingen, 1969); *Hester*, ed. Manfred Caliebe (Marburg, 1985); Heinrich von Hesler, *Die Apokalypse Heinrichs von Hesler aus der Danziger Handschrift*, ed. Karl Helm (Berlin, 1907); *Das Evangelium Nicodemi von Heinrich von Hesler*, ed. Karl Helm (Tübingen, 1902); Heinrich von Hesler, *Das Buch der Maccabäer in mitteldeutscher Bearbeitung*, ed. Karl Helm (Tübingen, 1904); *Die poetische Bearbeitung des Buches Daniel aus der Stuttgarter Handschrift*, ed. Arthur Hübner (Berlin, 1911); *Esdras und Neemyas. Eine Deutschordensdichtung aus dem 14. Jahrhundert*, ed. Samuel D. Stirck (Breslau, 1938); *Die mitteldeutsche poetische Paraphrase des Buches Hiob*, ed. Thorsten E. Karsten (Berlin, 1910).

⁶ For a complete list of the works of literature associated with the order see Karl Helm and Walther Ziesemer, *Die Literatur des deutschen Ritterordens* (Giessen, 1951) and Henrike Lähnemann, *Hystoria Judith. Deutsche Judithdichtungen vom 12. bis zum 16. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 2006), pp. 256–98.

There is relatively little direct documentary evidence for the success or otherwise of this educational initiative. Written records from the early fourteenth century are patchy and much was destroyed in the period from 1939 to 1945. However it is known that collections of books for ‘laymen’, that is to say the knight members of the order, were set up in Prussia during the fourteenth century. While the contents of these libraries can no longer be reconstructed, it seems likely that the *Kronike von Pruzinlant* would have been required reading at this time. There can be no doubt that it was of pivotal importance as a source of crusading ideology and Prussian history for contemporaries and later historians until the sixteenth century.

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Translator's Note

As far as possible, where a generally accepted English form exists for a place or personal name it has been used, for example the Vistula, the Curonian Spit, the Vistula Lagoon or King Andrew of Hungary. Place names have been given in the form used by the rulers in the area at the time being described in the chronicle and as far as possible their modern equivalents noted in the footnotes, although for the sake of consistency Brunswick has been left as Braunschweig throughout. Every effort has been made to identify the place names mentioned in the text, but this has not always been possible, and some of the sites, particularly of fortresses which no longer exist, can no longer be identified. The area covered by the order's Prussian state now forms part of modern Poland, Russia and Lithuania. Until recently there has been relatively little written in English about this area and there is still often no consensus on the 'correct' form of names in English. Curonia, for example, also exists in the form Courland or Kurland (German) and the people are frequently referred to as 'Kurs'. The current Latvian form is Kurzeme, which is unfamiliar to English speakers. Frequently, the most familiar version is still the German one. In many areas the German place names were used until 1945 and changed after the post-war settlement: many names therefore exist in four forms: German, Polish, Lithuanian and Russian. Confusingly, there are also some settlements which were in existence until 1945 but have been destroyed and no longer appear on the map. Rivers are also a potential source of confusion: the Daugava river (to give it its Latvian form) is also known as the Dūna (German), Väine (Estonian) and the Dvina (Russian). Variations on names appear in the footnotes after the first occurrence of the name.

Personal names of the main protagonists are given in their own language except where this would cause unnecessary confusion, for example Duke Frederick of Swabia. The name of the author, Nicolaus von Jeroschin, is variously spelled as Nikolaus or Nicolaus. The latter form, which is used by his nineteenth-century editor, has been adopted here. The order's name has been rendered as 'Teutonic Order', since this is the form in which it is most familiar to an English audience. This translation is not unproblematic. It carries with it an accumulation of historical baggage which has little relevance for the period of the chronicle. It has come to encapsulate views of the nature of the conquest of Prussia which were coloured by the events of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and which are now being revised in the light of modern scholarship. The German, *Deutscher Orden*, would otherwise normally be translated simply as 'German Order'.

The original chronicle is written in verse. Some repetition which is dictated by line length and the rhyme scheme has been omitted in the translation for the sake of clarity.

Although the text contains very little information on the structures or the organisation of the order and its officers, some specific terminology does occur. The order was governed by its *Hochmeister*, or Grand Master, who was elected by the chapter. In addition, there were *Landmeister* (Provincial Masters) of Prussia and Livonia and a *Deutschmeister* (German Master) who were responsible for the houses in their areas. The office of Master of Prussia became redundant after the Grand Masters moved the headquarters to Prussia in 1309. Thereafter the Marienburg became the seat of the Grand Master, along with his deputy, the *Großkomtur* ('Grand Commander') and the *Treßler* (the treasurer). The other great offices at the time of writing the chronicle, the *Marshall* (marshal), *Spittler* (the official in charge of the hospitals) and *Trappier* (the quartermaster in charge of clothing and equipment), were the commanders of Königsberg (Kaliningrad), Elbing (Elbląg) and Christburg (Dzierzgoń) respectively. The basic unit of the order's structure was a *Kommende*. In Germany and the Holy Land these *Kommenden* were generally structured into provinces, called *Balleien* under a *Landkomtur* or Provincial Commander. In Prussia there were no *Balleien*, with the exception of the Kulmerland (the region around the city of Kulm/Chełmno) and the *Kommenden* reported directly to the Master of Prussia. The leader of a *Kommende* was the *Komtur*, in the context of Prussia translated here as 'commander', and each house was expected to have a full complement of twelve brothers. One of these would be a priest, while the others were knights.¹ Normally each of the knight brothers was supported by other fighting men in a ratio of about one to ten. In the Teutonic Order these supporting fighting men were usually known as *Graumäntler* (grey-mantles, from the colour of their coats), *Sarjanbrüder* (sergeants, men-at-arms) or *Halbbrüder* (half brothers). The role of these men was to act as squires, supplying the knights with arms and spare horses, or as men-at-arms fighting alongside them. These distinctions do not exist in the language of the chronicle, and none of these terms is used in the text, with the exception of *halbbrudir*, which occurs once (p. 174).² The terms used are *wêpenêre*, *knecht*, *knabe*, or simply *man*, which are used interchangeably, sometimes with two of them used of the same person in the same incident, and these terms are also applied to heathen fighters.³ The knights' campaigns were also supported by western crusaders, referred to as 'pilgrims'

¹ For a more detailed overview of the order's structure see Klaus Militzer, *Die Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005).

² There is no doubt that this term was already in use in the order. According to Evald Johansson, *Die Deutschordenschronik des Nicolaus von Jeroschin. Eine sprachliche Untersuchung mit komparativer Analyse der Wortbildung* (Lund: Gleerup, 1964), p. 176, the earliest documented use of the term *halbbrudir* is in the laws of Burchard von Schwanden, promulgated in 1289, at least 40 years before the chronicle was written.

³ *Wêpenêre* is used by Jeroschin to translate the Latin *armiger* – one who bears arms, which can be used in the sense of squire or fighting man. *Knabe* variously translates *armiger*, *famulus* (Latin – servant, attendant, used once), or simply *vir* (Latin – man). It designates a higher status than *knecht*. On an occasion when some young men are being knighted, they

and by those conquered Prussians and settlers in their towns who owed the order military service.

The chronicle gives a vivid picture of the nature of the warfare. The main participants on the Christian were the *rittir*, the heavily armed knights who fought on heavy horses in the western chivalric tradition. These horses were brought to Prussia from the knights' homelands and were crucial to the order's military advantage. Generally only geldings were used on campaigns to prevent breeding stock falling into the hands of the enemy. The text contains many references to the theft of horses, underlining their strategic importance. Alongside the heavy cavalry horses, both the order and the Prussians used lighter, faster horses in warfare and for transport. These were often referred to as *sweik*, although, again, this term is not used in the text. The pagan horsemen and the order's supporting troops are referred to as *ritin* (translated as 'horsemen') to distinguish them functionally and in terms of status from the knights.¹

References to castle building and fortifications also give a picture of the nature of the war. Until the latter part of the thirteenth century castles were built of wood and often fortified by ditches and wooden palisades. The order's first defensive position in Thorn was a fortified oak tree (p. 67). Fighters often improvised wooden defences during the course of campaigns. The skills of carpenters were valued as builders and as makers of siege engines, trebuchets (*blide*), siege towers (*bercvrit* and *ebenhohe*) and crossbows. Wooden castles were relatively quick and easy to build during the course of the initial conquest, but they were of course susceptible to attack by fire. As the order consolidated its control it began to build more permanent structures. The first brick castle was built in Thorn in 1255 and from the last decades of the thirteenth century an increasing number of substantial brick castles which also served as administrative headquarters for the surrounding area were built. Castles generally had an inner fortified area around a quadrangle, which housed the knights and their men, and enough supplies to withstand a prolonged siege, and an outer, less securely fortified area (*vorburg*).² The most famous of these is the Marienburg, which was redeveloped under the leadership of the first grand masters who were based there in the first half of the thirteenth century to become a seat worthy of receiving the crowned heads of Europe who travelled to Prussia to take part in the *Reisen* (crusades) against the Lithuanians.

are described as *knaben edler slacht* (young men from noble families). *Knecht* is used to translate *armiger*, *armatus* (Latin – armed man) or *famulus* in roughly equal measure.

¹ See Sven Ekdahl, 'Horses and Crossbows: Two Important Advantages of the Teutonic Order in Prussia', in Helen Nicholson (ed.), *The Military Orders. Volume 2. Welfare and Warfare* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).

² See Marian Arsyński, 'Die Deutschordensburg als Klosterbau', in Zenon Hubert Nowak (ed.), *Die Spiritualität der Ritterorden im Mittelalter*, *Ordines Militares: Colloquia Torunensia Historica VII* (Universitas Nicolai Copernici: Toruń, 1993) and Stephen Turnbull, *Crusader Castles of the Teutonic Knights*, Volume 1, *The Red-brick Castles of Prussia 1230–1466* (Osprey: Oxford, 2003).

Chapter Headings

For ease of comparison, the line numbers of Strehlke's text have been given in brackets after the chapter headings. The Roman numerals I–IV refer to the sections of Dusburg's chronicle, and the following Arabic numerals refer to the chapter numbering of Dusburg's text. 'S' refers to the 20 supplementary chapters of Dusburg's chronicle, covering the years 1326–30, which Jeroschin also translated. A further supplement added by Jeroschin himself takes the chronicle up to 1331.

Grand Masters of the Teutonic Order and Masters of Prussia

Grand Masters

Heinrich Walpot	1198–1200
Otto von Kerpen	1200–09
Heinrich (Hermann) Bart	1209
Hermann von Salza	1209–39
Konrad von Thüringen	1239–40
Gerhard von Malberg	1240–44
Heinrich von Hohenlohe	1244–49
Günther von Wüllersleben	1249–52
Poppo von Osterna	1252–56
Anno von Sangershausen	1256–73
Hartmann von Heldrungen	1273–83
Burchard von Schwanden	1283–90
Konrad von Feuchtwangen	1291–96
Gottfried von Hohenlohe	1297–1303
Siegfried von Feuchtwangen	1303–1311
Karl von Trier	1311–24
Werner von Orseln	1324–30
Luder von Braunschweig	1331–35
Dietrich von Altenburg	1335–41

Masters of Prussia

Hermann Balk	1230–09
Heinrich von Weide	1239–44
Poppo von Osterna	1244–47
Dietrich von Grüningen	1247–59
Hartmann von Grünbach	1259–61
Helmerich von Würzburg	1262–63
Johann von Wegleben	1263
Ludwig von Baldersheim	1263–69
Dietrich von Gattersleben	1271–73
Konrad von Tierberg	1273–79
Konrad von Feuchtwangen	1279–80
Mangold von Sternberg	1280–83
Konrad von Tierberg	1283–88
Meinhard von Querfurt	1288–99
Konrad von Babenberg	1299–1300
Ludwig von Schüpf	1299–1300
Helwig von Goldbach	1301–02
Konrad Sack	1302–06
Sieghard von Schwarzburg	1306
Heinrich von Plötzkau	1307–09

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The Chonicle of Prussia

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The Chronicle of Prussia

Lines 1–300

God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, you transcend everything in your power, wisdom and goodness. Nothing is created without you. Out of nothing, your divine dominion created and gave form to heaven, earth and the sea and all the creatures in them, whether they hover, lie, float, fly, run, swim, slither or swarm; your trinity gave life, form and being to all creatures, pleasing or monstrous, moving or still, normal or unusual. You, Father, have the power; you, the Son, have wisdom; you, Holy Ghost have goodness, all in divine perfection. These three indivisible persons are united in one God, from whom, through whom and in whom all things have their origin. The power of God the Father gave rise to all living beings; God the Son gave them their wondrously varied forms; God the Holy Ghost regulates their natural growth. All this is a reflection of God's goodness. Thus all things were created perfect by you, O Holy Trinity, in countless miracles shown to those who know how to recognise them. And above all the other miracles, you graciously created people in your own image and gave them wisdom according to their station, with sevenfold grace inspired by your Spirit, and made all people different, each one as he pleased, knowing their hearts to be pure. Alas, now the ice of sin has entered my soul. The sweet breath of the spirit avoids me, my wits are dulled, and I am more stupid than a beast. So my heart goes on bended knee before you, gracious God, pleading with you to heal my poor heart from all the pain of sin and make it full of grace and joy by the power of your virtue. Look after me, benevolent God: may the Father send me the power to complete the task I have planned; may the Son's wisdom guide my feeble mind and give me understanding; sweet Spirit, may your goodness flow through my soul, washing away all sinfulness, so that I may be a fitting dwelling place for you. Lord, take possession of my heart, make your blessedness shine on me and fill me with your grace; give me true, wise words, so that my tongue may praise you with my verses, to which I will now direct myself, as my superior has ordered me!¹

‘God on high has performed signs and miracles for me, so I will preach about the signs He has given, because they are mighty, and proclaim His miracles, because they are great.’² These words were spoken by King Nebuchadnezzar when he ordered Daniel and his companions to be thrown into the fiery furnace. It was heated

¹ This prologue in praise of the Trinity replaces a dedication to Grand Master Werner von Orseln which opens Peter of Dusburg's version.

² Daniel 4, 7. The trials and endurance depicted in the Book of Daniel evidently resonated with the members of the order. A vernacular translation associated with the order

seven times more than was usual so that the flames leapt 49 ells high and burned the king's advisors, but the three boys in the middle of the oven were unscathed by the fire; neither their bodies nor their clothing nor their hair was harmed by the blaze nor were they blackened by the smoke. When the king witnessed the miracle he uttered the words above: 'God has performed great miracles and given mighty signs to me.' The same words could be said by Brother Dietrich von Altenburg, the grand master of the Teutonic Order,¹ since he is the chief representative at present in the country of Prussia: 'God on high has performed signs and miracles for me here in Prussia through the many events which have happened to the children of my order, the brothers. He has often performed a miracle to comfort them and rescue them from desperate hardship in the furnace of strict obedience, heated sevenfold with seven forms of wretchedness. In God's name they uncomplainingly endured heat, frost, hunger and thirst, wounds, chains and bitter death, so that their manly courage in the fires of martyrdom was never tainted by unbecoming behaviour (as you will hear shortly, if God wills that we reach the subject of these miracles). These great signs, these mighty wonders should not be lost under a cloak of oblivion. I intend to preach God's miracles and have them proclaimed through the mouthpiece of my chaplain; for God's miraculous deeds should not be forgotten.' So says the wise prince, and so he handed me the text of the chronicle of Prussia, which was carefully written in Latin by the priest Peter von Dusburg several years ago,² and commanded me to apply myself to a German translation, so that it might explain to all German people the signs and miracles which God in His goodness performed in Prussia, so that wherever they are heard they bring more praise, glory and honour to God. I accepted the task from this honourable man and I intend to complete it if I can, to gain his favour, so that whoever reads this book will wish him blessings here and eternal bliss in the next life. No-one should criticise me for changing the subject to Brother Dietrich, the Grand Master, because I am right to do so. I am aware that some people know I had earlier begun to compose this book at the request of Master Luder³ (may God protect his soul) and had written

dates from around 1335. See, Karl Helm and Walther Zieseimer, *Die Literatur des deutschen Ritterordens* (Giessen: Wilhelm Schmitz Verlag, 1951), p. 100.

¹ Dietrich von Altenburg was grand master of the order from 1335 until his death in 1341. He joined the order in 1307 and was commander at Ragnit from 1320 to 1324 and at Balga from 1326 until 1331. From 1331, as marshal, he led the campaigns against Poland and captured Kujavia for the order. As grand master he enacted a number of changes to the order's rule apparently intended to strengthen religious observance among the knight brothers and consolidated the territory's defences. He re-commissioned Jeroschin's translation of Dusburg's chronicle, after the first attempt had been aborted, apparently because of internal opposition; see Klaus Conrad in Arnold (ed.), *Hochmeister*, pp. 70–73.

² Peter von Dusburg's *Chronica Terre Prussiae* was written while he was a priest brother in the order, probably at Königsberg. It was commissioned by Grand Master Werner von Orseln between 1324 and 1326.

³ Luder von Braunschweig (c.1275–1335) was grand master of the order from 1331. He was the youngest son of Duke Albrecht of Brunswick-Lüneburg, and as such of higher

more than 40 pages which were destroyed by the angry beast which tore Joseph's coat to pieces.¹ So what I am doing now is entirely at the request of Grand Master Dietrich. At this point I should also name myself, not out of a desire for fame, because I can easily do without that, but in case anyone accuses my verses of being dull, wrong, irregular or of not making sense, because then I alone am responsible for what is written in my name. That is why I am making my name known. I am also naming myself for my friends, so that they as friends can pray for me to be able to finish this book properly, so that it is pleasing, laudable and acceptable to God, Mary and the Master, for whom I am performing this service and whose servant as chaplain I shall always be. So that I, Nicolaus von Jeroschin, am worthy of this, help me gracious God and you, virgin Mother!

Well begun is half done, and before he starts, the writer must have clear in his mind the content he intends to cover and divide it up, as preachers do; they divide up their material into sections before they finally say anything about it and do not mix up the order of the sections. In working through the material the poet should also keep the rhymes regular and rhyme like with like in terms of length, meaning and sound. I interpret that like this: many words are written in the same way but sound different; the poet should avoid such rhymes and also not break up the sense. The length is determined by the number of syllables: here it should be noted that five syllables are too short and ten too long; skilled writers use a number of syllables between these two extremes and I will follow their example. I will divide the chronicle into four sections: in the first part I will relate when and how the Order of the German House came into being and who founded it. The second part will inform you how and when the Brothers of the Teutonic Order came to Prussia. In the third section I will tell how, with the help of the power of God, the Teutonic Brethren in Prussia waged war against the terrible heathens, according to what I have seen written down or have witnessed myself. The fourth part will inform you which popes and emperors have ruled since the Teutonic Order came

status than most recruits to the order. He is first documented as a member of the order in Prussia in 1297. From 1308 until 1312 he was commander at Gollub, from 1314 commander at Christburg, a post which became associated with one of the chief posts in the order, that of Senior Quartermaster (*Oberster Trappier*). He succeeded to the role of grand master after his predecessor Werner von Orseln was stabbed to death by a member of the order. His appointment re-establishes the order's early links with the counts of Thuringia and was undoubtedly intended to bring stability to the leadership. He is also credited with beginning the transformation of the office of grand master to the status of a prince of the empire. He began the renovation of the Marienburg into a prince's palace and initiated the building of the *Annenkapelle* there as a burial place for the grand masters. He was a patron of literature and bible translation, including a translation of the Books of the Maccabees and of Daniel and he himself is known to have written a life of St Barbara.

¹ This reference suggests that fellow brothers destroyed the manuscript. The reasons for this are unclear, although some commentators have suggested there was opposition to making the chronicle available in the vernacular. The reference is to Joseph's treatment by his brothers when they tore up his 'coat of many colours'; see Genesis 37, 31–33.

into existence. I will also include what happened in other parts of the world during their lifetimes, according to what I have found written elsewhere. This is the fourth section of the book. I have decided to insert section four into the other sections, weaving it in wherever there is a suitable opportunity, so that all this information is presented in strict chronological order. That also keeps the thread of the story clear. I intend to confine the number of syllables to six, seven, eight or nine; sometimes I will use two short ones alongside a long one. I will form my rhymes on the same sound at the end of the line without changing the meaning. And because I am lacking in intellect, and have not mastered these skills, and additionally do not know much German, other than what I learned with my mother's milk, so that my words are not well tailored to courtly conventions nor as fine as the nature of this poem demands, I need a great deal of help if I am to complete this book successfully. Poor wretch that I am, I call on you, sweet Mary. O mother, stay by me and help me and I will put my trust in you. O source of all faithfulness, I rely on your comfort; I know you to be so true that I have no doubt that you will stand by me. See if you dare abandon me! My hope rests on you, gracious queen; now go ahead to lead the way, because I am starting this book to win you praise.

Book 1

Lines 331–900; I, 1

In the name of our Lord, may all those who are listening to this say together: ‘Amen’. Eleven hundred and ninety years after the pure Virgin gave birth to Christ, when the city of Acre was being besieged by the Christians and during the campaign when, with the help of God, after many fierce battles it was recaptured from the control of the heathens, there were a number of pious and devout merchants from the cities of Lübeck and Bremen among the Christian army which made the journey across the sea. Looking about them, they were distressed to witness the hardship and great discomfort endured by the poor sick people among the German contingent. They were merciful people so out of kindness they took action and founded a hospital on the battlefield among their tents.¹ It was made from the sail of a cog,² according to what I have read. The sick were brought there and they tended them humbly and with devotion. In their kindness they acquired what they needed or generously donated it from the possessions with which God had endowed them. They kept in mind that an act of charity to every sick or poor person was also an act of charity to our Lord Christ. At judgement day when there is great distress all round He will say to those at his right hand: ‘Come, the blessed, and take possession of my kingdom in all eternity. I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and naked and you gave me something to drink and clothed me; I was sick and you looked after me.’ ‘O lord, when did we see you in need?’ And he will say to them: ‘In truth I say to you, when you humbly looked after the least of my brothers you were taking care of me.’³ Now take note that Christ calls everyone who is sick or unloved His brother, and this is proved because He became human and is our own flesh and our brother. That wise teacher St Paul says: ‘I have planted plants, Apollo has watered them, but God made them grow and bear fruit.’⁴ These words show that neither he who plants nor he who waters is important in the greater scheme of things, but only God, who makes things grow. But people must exert themselves to look after these new plants, which bear rich fruit and promise

¹ This account of the order’s origins is based on the prologue of the order’s statutes (see *Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens*, ed. Max Perlbach (Halle: Niemeyer, 1890; republished Hildesheim: Olms, 1975), p. 22) and like the other accounts of this period omits to mention the German hospital which existed in Jerusalem in 1143 and was under the control of the Knights of St John. This hospital was destroyed by Saladin in 1187.

² A type of wide-bottomed boat, later widely used in Prussia.

³ Matthew 25, 34–36.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 3, 6.

even more when they reach maturity. This is the reason the princes and lords were assembled there in the Christian army in the service and honour of God: the worthy Patriarch of Jerusalem and Archbishops of Tyre, Caesarea, and Nazareth, the bishops of Acre and Bethlehem, King Henry of Jerusalem¹ and a large number of his men, the Master of the Hospital of the Order of St John and the Master of the Order of the Temple and many brothers from both orders. Also present were many barons from the Holy Land, Lord Ralph of Tiberias and his brother, Lord Hugh, Lord John of Ibelin, Lord Aymar of Caesarea, Lord Reynald of Sidon and many other honest lords from the kingdom of Jerusalem; there were also many great lords from Germany brought there by the will of God: an archbishop named Konrad who held the bishopric of Mainz, and Bishop Konrad of Würzburg, who was also Chancellor of the Roman Empire; Lord Volker, bishop of Passau, Bishop Gardolf of Halberstadt and the bishop of Zeitz, who had all come in the name of God. Many high-born princes had come to wage war on the heathens. Their names were as follows, according to what we have heard: the praiseworthy Duke Frederick of Swabia;² an outstandingly noble and virtuous prince named Henry who was Count Palatine of the Rhineland and duke of Brunswick;³ also Duke Frederick, a great prince from Austria;⁴ Duke Henry of Brabant, the commander of the army;⁵ a prince called Hermann, count palatine of Saxony and even more practised in leadership since he was also landgrave of Thuringia,⁶ according to my reading;

¹ Probably Henry II of Champagne (d. 1197), who succeeded to the throne after marrying Isabella, Queen of Jerusalem and widow of Conrad of Montferrat.

² The events described here took place during the Third Crusade, a response to Saladin's conquest of Jerusalem in 1187. The original leader of the German contingent, Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa, died before reaching the Holy Land. His second son, Frederick of Swabia, led those crusaders who remained after the emperor's death to Antioch, but he too died, of fever, in 1191 during the siege of Acre and cannot therefore have taken part in this assembly. The role of leader was taken over by Leopold of Austria. The account of the participants is based on the *Narratio de primordiis ordinis Theutonici* (ed. Walther Hubatsch, SRP, vol. 6 (Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1968), pp. 22–9), and contains many inaccuracies. The death of so many participants illustrates the pressing need for care of the sick and wounded. The new foundation was granted papal protection in 1191.

³ Heinrich was the oldest son of Henry the Lion and his second wife Matilda of England, the daughter of Henry II. The dukedom of Brunswick-Lüneburg did not come into being until 1235, when Heinrich's nephew Otto inherited and united all the Guelph lands in north Germany.

⁴ Frederick I of Austria (1175–98), a member of the Babenberg dynasty, died on his return from the crusade.

⁵ Henry of Brabant (1165–1235) was one of the leaders of the crusade and took part in the recapture of Beirut. He returned to Acre after the death of Henry of Champagne and took control of the government until the selection of Amalric as the king of Jerusalem.

⁶ Hermann I, d. 1217.

Albrecht, margrave of Brandenburg, a powerful and just prince;¹ a bold lord called Heinrich von Kalden, Marshal of the Empire;² Konrad, margrave of Landsberg and Margrave Dietrich of Meissen,³ according to what I have heard. All these lords I have named and many other counts and lords and nobles whom I cannot mention by name, but were in this same army, all these looked kindly on the hospital, young and newly planted and yet fruitful, pregnant with the fruits of blessedness and they hoped that if God willed it, and the foundation grew even more vigorously and stretched out its branches, in the future it would bear abundant fruit. Therefore all the assembled lords agreed that Duke Frederick of Swabia should take charge of the matter and they nominated a delegation which he sent with all due circumstance to his majesty, his brother King Henry, then king of the Romans, and afterwards Emperor Henry VI, asking him to pursue the matter and make representations to the pope, requesting him to formally establish and endow the foundation of the new hospital. When the delegation arrived, the pope willingly granted the pious lords' wishes, conveyed to him in such a fitting manner, and generously endowed the foundation of the hospital, to which he gave the rule of the Hospital of St John for the care of the sick and the poor and instituted a body of knights which he gave the rule of the Templars. And so two branches were appointed by the pope and confirmed together in God's name.⁴ The pope gave the brothers of the hospital a habit of a white cloak with a black cross.⁵ He also

¹ Albrecht was at this time count of Arneburg and became margrave of Brandenburg in 1205.

² Heinrich von Kalden (c.1175–c.1208) was marshal of the empire under Henry VI. Henry had entrusted him with the control of the imperial contingent during the crusade but he was unable to assert his leadership and was forced to stand down in favour of Henry of Brabant.

³ Dietrich of Meissen was by this time (March 1198) no longer in the Holy Land, but had returned to Germany after the death of Henry VI (September 1197).

⁴ This account conflates the founding of the hospital in 1190 and of the military order in 1198. The hospital had been given lands and buildings between the inner and outer city walls in Acre after the siege was successfully concluded in 1191. Its duties included maintenance of the walls and it is likely that it may have gradually taken on more of a military role. Emperor Henry VI appears to have regarded it as a potential tool in his strategy for the Mediterranean area, and granted it lands in Italy and Sicily. He took the cross in 1195 and his fleet sailed for the Holy Land in 1197 but he became ill and died before he could undertake the crusade. Nonetheless, those princes who did arrive in the Holy Land appear to have carried out the late emperor's intended policy by transforming the hospital into a military order in 1198. The new master, Heinrich Walpot, travelled to Rome to obtain papal confirmation which was granted by Innocent III in February 1199. See Klaus Miltzer, *Die Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005), pp. 12–4 and Udo Arnold (ed.), *Die Hochmeister des Deutschen Ordens, 1190–1994* (Marburg: N. G. Elwert, 1998), pp. 4–10.

⁵ The habit was in fact only agreed in 1221. See Peter von Dusburg, *Chronik des Preussenlandes*, translated into German and annotated by Klaus Scholz and Dieter

confirmed all the privileges which had previously been given by the popes to the honourable orders of the Hospital of St John and the Temple, so that the hospital could use them freely, as those other orders did. It was proper and fitting that those who were to perform the same virtuous deeds should receive the same papal gifts. In this way, the praiseworthy chivalric Order of the Brothers of the Hospital of the Virgin Mary, known as the German House in Jerusalem, was founded, endowed and given many privileges and made rich. This is the tender vineyard chosen by the Lord Zeboath, which you, Christ, sweet Lord founded and chose to lead. You pruned it and planted its roots. Now it has joyously spread across the world. Afterwards you carried it into the land of Prussia and to Livonia, where you drove out many heathens and planted it once more. There it has wonderfully spread its vines everywhere as far as the sea and sent its shoots to flourish at the wave's edge.¹ This praiseworthy order of knights was not only confirmed by the decision of men here on earth, but gracious God in heaven has also confirmed it and praised it in the heavenly kingdom and given many prefigurations of it.² We can read in the Old Testament that good Abraham, the great patriarch, chose 318 of his men and rode with them against the heathens to fight for his brother, Lot, whom they had taken prisoner, freed him and all those in prison with him from their captivity and defeated the heathens in battle. When he was on his way home from the battle Abraham met Melchisidech, who, I have read, was both king and priest, who gave him bread and wine and encouraged him always to pursue blessings from God on high, whose protection allowed him to defeat his enemy.³ From this time the faithful began enter into fierce knightly battles against the heathens. It was also at this time that the Holy Ghost revealed how the head of the church should show favour to knights, bless them and receive them into the protection of the church and should also confirm with privileges and deeds their rights to benefit from the use of any of the property good people gave to them as an act of piety. This body of knights is the most pleasing of its kind and rightly so, because it has sworn itself to avenge God's torments and His crucifixion and to fight for the Holy Land, which rightfully belonged to Christians but had been seized by the heathens. St John saw the church militant coming down from heaven like the New Jerusalem,⁴ and among other heavenly hordes were the angels *potestates*,⁵ who fight to drive

Wojtecki, *Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters* 25 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984), p. 43.

¹ Psalms 80, 8–11.

² Dusburg and Jeroschin are here drawing on a long tradition of justifying warfare in the name of the church which had its origins in the crusading exhortations of popes and theologians dating back in the popular consciousness to Urban II's speech at Clermont in 1095.

³ Genesis 14, 14–20.

⁴ Revelation 21.

⁵ In the medieval church angels were divided into nine orders and three hierarchies. The angels *potestates* were in the intermediate group and were so called because they had

off the devil's power. *Potestates* means the powerful ones, and this proves to us that the church is meant to have this knighthood, which protects it and by its mighty power drives off the forces of unbelief and all visible dangers, just as the *potestates* exerted themselves to protect Christianity from invisible threats. It is clear that by engaging in warfare the knights of the Teutonic Order drive danger away from Christendom. A further endorsement of Prussia is that, under Moses and Joshua and other Judges who ruled over the Jews during the years of the Judges, there were holy knights who fought heroic battles chosen by God and pleasing to Him.¹ They fought the tribe of Enachim² and other unfaithful inhabitants of the Holy Land as boldly as lions and destroyed them so completely that none was left in the whole country except those designated by God's people who were prepared to serve them and were kept to keep them informed about the country's affairs. With the passage of time the number of prefigurations of the order has increased. David was a king of whom God approved, whom He himself chose for his people's kingdom. He was also a great prophet and had foreknowledge of future events. For this reason he knew in advance of this body of knights and wanted to prefigure them as they were to be. He chose two tribes from among his people, one called the Cherethites and the other the Pelethites, and gave them the task of protecting him from all danger, according to the meaning of their names: 'Cherethite' means much the same as 'destroyer'; 'Pelethite' means 'wonderful rescuer'.³ This interpretation was very apt, because they took care of the king and destroyed all who threatened his life. They also rewarded those who were dear to him and who submitted to him with their support. Their story fits in well with this army of knights which strives fearlessly to guard the king called Christ who is the true head of Christendom. These gallant knights think nothing of losing their lives in His service and keep their sword on their hips at all times, like the warriors of Israel. They have valiantly chosen to fight; they surround the bed of the true Solomon and guard him boldly and carefully. In Christian lands they drive away and extinguish the dangers of the night and the darkness of unbelief.⁴ We also remember what was suffered in the past for the love of God and the demands of honour by those worthy knights known as the Maccabees⁵ when they left their

power over the devil.

¹ Judges 5, 8.

² Genesis 6, 4. Enachim means 'giants'.

³ 2 Samuel 15, 18; 1 Kings 1, 44.

⁴ Song of Songs 3, 7–8.

⁵ The Maccabees were a particularly apt parallel for the military orders, since they fought to expel their enemies from the holy places in Jerusalem. The Templars were compared to the Maccabees in Celestine II's bull *Milites Templi Hierosolymitani* (1144) and frequently thereafter. Honorius III and Gregory IX specifically compared the Teutonic Knights to the Maccabees in 1221 and 1230 respectively. A vernacular translation of the Books of the Maccabees was commissioned for the order by Luder von Braunschweig. The chronicle itself is remarkable for the systematic use it makes of the Maccabees as

ancestral lands and went out into the desert, where many of them were forced by hunger to eat grass instead of bread so that they were not defiled or corrupted like the heathens.¹ They fought many laudable battles in their day against the evil heathens who wanted to compel them by force of arms to abandon God and His commandments and to give themselves up to a pagan way of life and live in sinful apostasy. But God gave them the courage to defeat the evil Antiochus, who was denounced as the root of sinfulness because he used to evilly tempt God's people into great sin and was the cause of much wickedness.² They annihilated him and his hordes so completely that they were able to establish peace and security and cleanse the holy places of the Temple which had been desecrated by the heathens. They also recaptured and occupied the citadel of Zion and imposed peace on the whole country. The holy, chivalric Order of the German House is the bold successor to these wars, in my opinion, and is worthy of the many honourable members who have commanded it to the glory of God. They are true knights and elect warriors who risk death for the honour of God. For the sake of their Father's land they destroy and eradicate the enemies of the faith with a strong arm. In the abundance of their love the good knights receive guests, pilgrims and the poor. They also take pity on the sick, lying in all manner of distress in hospitals, whom they tend generously, humbly and ardently in the course of their duty.³ Clerics also have an honourable place among the membership and should remember that at times of peace they should go among the lay members, shining like points of light, reminding them unceasingly to strive to observe the rule of the order of which they are members. As befits their calling, the clerics also conduct church services and offer the sacraments; in times of warfare they should offer the brothers consolation to fortify them for battle and remind them to think of the bitter sufferings and terrible death God endured for them on the cross. From start to finish they make a strong impression on all those for whom they care, from the vigorous knights to the sick and weak destined for the coffin, all of whose souls they carefully protect when they depart this life. They accomplish all their service in the course of their duty in the gentleness of the Holy Spirit. Because this order has spread by making

prefigurations of the order. See Helen Nicholson, *Templars, Hospitallers and Teutonic Knights. Images of the Military Orders* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1998), p. 15, and Mary Fischer, 'The Books of the Maccabees and the Teutonic Order', *Crusades*, 4 (2005): pp. 59–71.

¹ 2 Maccabees 5, 27.

² 2 Maccabees 4, 11.

³ Although the order was primarily a military organisation after 1198, it supported hospitals throughout its history. The main hospital was in Acre until 1291. After the grand master moved to Prussia in 1309, the chief hospitaller (*Oberster Spittler*) was attached to Elbing and this became the order's main hospital. The order also acquired many hospitals in Italy, southern France and the Holy Roman Empire from 1200 onwards. See Klaus Militzer, 'The role of Hospitals in the Teutonic Order', in H. Nicholson (ed.), *The Military Orders*. Volume 2. *Welfare and Warfare* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), pp. 51–9.

itself useful to the church it has benefited from the fact that many popes have looked kindly on it and granted and confirmed many freedoms and privileges and made it illustrious.

**Of Brother Heinrich Walpot, the first master of the Teutonic Order
Lines 901–78; I, 2**

Brother Heinrich, who according to what I have read was known as Walpot, was selected as the first master of the order and this true hero of God undertook to lead the Hospital of the Virgin Mary of the German House.¹ The original founders of the order, as I have already described, the citizens of Lübeck and Bremen, who were most pleasing to God, had completed their pilgrimage and wanted to leave and go back home. Therefore on the advice of Duke Frederick of Swabia, a great prince we have mentioned before, and many other great lords from German lands who had also taken part in the siege of Acre, it was decided that the hospital should be left in the charge of the master, with all the charitable gifts it had received and with sufficient other equipment. In the hospital this bold warrior was always ready with his brothers to serve the sick with humility and graciously provide for all their needs. Afterwards, when the city of Acre was recaptured by the Christians, Brother Heinrich, the self-same master, bought a garden by the wall at the St Nicolas Gate. On this site he built a church, hospital and living quarters where this pure man and his brothers conscientiously served God and the sick. Some time later that great man, Duke Frederick of Swabia, was buried in this same church, since God's hero had chosen to be buried there while he was suffering from the fever which had struck him down just as he was about to depart. He finally succumbed and, after a mass, was brought back to Acre where he was granted burial as he had requested. Thereafter Master Heinrich held office in God's name for many years. He too died at Acre and was buried there on the fifth day after All Saints' Day, which is also his anniversary.²

¹ In fact the original master of the hospital is now thought to have been Sibrand, who may have been one of the citizens of Bremen or Lübeck who founded it. His successor, Gerhard, acquired the land at the St Nicolas Gate, near the Armenian Hospital and the English hospital of St Thomas in 1192. Heinrich Walpot became master when the hospital became a military order in 1198 and held office for two years until 1200. See Arnold, *Hochmeister*, pp. 4–8.

² 5 November 1200.

Of Brother Otto, the second master**Lines 979–88; I, 3**

After him, the second master was Brother Otto, and he was in charge of the hospital for many a day.¹ Finally, as we read, he died on 12 June, when we celebrate Marcellinus and Peter, and I have heard that he too was buried at Acre.

Of the third master**Lines 989–1,000; I, 4**

After this came the third master, who was called Brother Hermann Bart and was the head of the order for a long time.² Finally he followed in the footsteps of death, which no-one can avoid, and was also buried at Acre. This happened on 20 March. His anniversary is observed on the eve of St Benedict's Day.

Of Brother Hermann, the fourth master of the German House**Lines 1,001–1,191; I, 5**

Brother Hermann von Salza afterwards became the fourth master, remained in office for many years and earned great praise.³ He died on 24 July. He was buried amid great mourning at Barletta on St Christina's Day. This bold warrior was blessed by God in many ways; he was eloquent and wise, far-sighted, friendly, just and honest in all his dealings. Seeing that his order was so weak, this hero, on being elected Master by his brothers, said with great emotion: 'O Lord, heavenly God, I would gladly give up one eye for the rest of my life, if my order would only grow during my leadership to be able to support ten knight brothers with weapons, no more.' This was his fervent wish. But you, gracious Jesus, who are

¹ Otto von Kerpen was grand master from 1200 until 1208/9.

² Hermann or Heinrich Bart may have been grand master in 1209. Dusburg calls him Hermann, but Heinrich is likely to be the correct form. He is documented as having arrived in the Holy Land in autumn 1208, but nothing more is known about him. See Arnold, *Hochmeister*, pp. 4–8.

³ Hermann von Salza was grand master from 1209 to 1239. He is regarded as the founder of the order's future success. He came from a family of *ministeriales* in Thuringia. He was a trusted adviser of Emperor Frederick II and mediated between the emperor and Pope Honorius III in their dispute about Frederick's dilatoriness in fulfilling his crusading vow and again when Gregory IX excommunicated Frederick. Hermann von Salza exploited his links with the emperor and the papacy to establish the order's independence, both from the older orders and from temporal overlords. During his period as grand master the order was not only active in the Holy Land, but became involved in ventures in Spain, the Burzenland, Prussia and Livonia. William Urban, *The Teutonic Knights. A Military History* (London: Greenhill Books, 2005) pp. 23–6, Arnold, *Hochmeister*, pp. 12–16.

ready at all times for just men who make requests of you in a seemly manner and graciously fulfil all just desires, what did you do? Did you let him plead in vain? Of course not: your kind generosity granted him everything his soul desired: his period in office went so well that the order's wealth and power increased so much that after his death there were 2,000 brothers, noblemen from German lands and outstanding examples of manhood. During this master's time in office, the well-born Lord Konrad, landgrave of Thuringia, in whose service Hermann had been while he was still in the world, himself joined the order.¹ The honourable lord put on the habit of the order and swore obedience to the man who had formerly served him and submitted himself to his command along with a laudable troop of bold knights, who also renounced both possessions and pride and came with him. Before he died, this master also acquired for the order the most advantageous and best privileges from the pope and the emperor the brothers had ever had. During his lifetime the order was also given donations of land in Apulia, Romania,² Armenia, an area in Hungary called the Burzenland,³ Livonia and Prussia, all of which came into the brothers' ownership. No order has ever been so elevated, in terms of its possessions and reputation, as a result of one man's actions, and that was no surprise. God gave him the particular blessing that everyone looked favourably on him and it was truly possible to say of him, in the words of Solomon: 'He is dear to God and his people.'⁴ His memory is forever blessed. He was dear to God on earth, because he did as He commanded, and therefore He raised him so high. The people too were all fond of him. He held the pope and the emperor, kings, dukes, noble princes in the palm of his hand and the good man made all the princes listen to him, so that they did everything he asked of them which was honourable and beneficial to the interests of the order. During the years when the Venetians were being severely punished because they had rebelled against the empire, they brought Emperor Frederick II as a precious gift a large piece of the Holy Cross on which God died to save us. The emperor gave this excellent present to Master Hermann, who sent it straight away to Prussia, to the fortress at Elbing,⁵ where still today Christian people venerate it for the many blessings they have received, because God has performed many miracles for many people through His Holy Cross. It also happened that during his time in office a dispute broke out between Pope Honorius III and Emperor Frederick. When this had been going on in secret between them for some time, it occurred to them to put both their cases

¹ Konrad of Thuringia later became grand master. The early history of the order is closely linked to the house of Thuringia and the Staufen emperors.

² Not the modern state of Romania, but those Byzantine lands conquered by the Fourth Crusade in 1204.

³ The Burzenland is an area in south-eastern Transylvania, now part of modern Romania, but at this time part of the kingdom of Hungary. For the controversy surrounding the order's intervention there, see Urban, *The Teutonic Knights*, pp. 33–6.

⁴ Ecclesiasticus 45, 1.

⁵ Modern Elbląg, Poland.

to Brother Hermann, so that he could adjudicate, and whatever he decided, they would accept. This was what they both wanted. When he heard of it, in his wisdom he broke away from the negotiations. ‘How could it be appropriate for me, as a humble, unworthy man, to intervene to reconcile the lords of the whole world?’ Thereupon the pope and the emperor decided to make Brother Hermann a prince, so that he was regarded more highly and accorded more respect, and the same honour was to be given in perpetuity to his successors in the office of master of the Teutonic Order. As evidence of this, the same pope put a ring on his finger, so that he was held in higher esteem; the emperor gave him the right to bear the insignia of the empire on his banners, weapons and trappings. This endowment too was to extend to all the masters who succeeded him in office. He then brought the dispute between the emperor and the pope to a friendly resolution and often performed the same office when any dispute broke out between them thereafter.

A digression

Lines 1,192–333; IV, 1–13

Now I will set to rhyme, and while I am rhyming sort into the right order, and having put them in the right order, describe, and while I am describing them insert and order into this piece of writing all the popes and emperors there have been since the time that the Order of the German House was founded, on the basis of reliable documents; it is also probably right that I weave into the narrative some history of the entertaining events which happened in the world in their day and also what they themselves are known to have done. In God’s name I shall begin.¹

In the year of our Lord 1190, when the House of the Teutonic Order began, Celestine III was pope and Emperor Henry VI ruled in might. After this Innocent III graced the papacy and Otto IV was emperor. After him Emperor Frederick II ruled in magnificence.

In the year of our Lord 1200, the city of Constantinople, whose prophesies assured it that no-one would ever attack it with such force that its walls would be breached, except with the help of an angel, was captured by the Franks and the Venetians. The citizens were tricked by the prophecy, because the words of the prophecy were not contradicted: they came through the walls where an angel was painted on them. At this time that noble warrior Count Baldwin of Flanders was chosen to be emperor. From that time on Latin Christians ruled there for 57

¹ This information was collated with in a separate section (IV) at the end of Dusburg’s text. As he explained above, Jeroschin chose to interweave the material at suitable points throughout the text. The information which follows and in subsequent ‘Digressions’ is based on the Dominicans Bartholomew of Lucca’s *Historia Ecclesiastica Nova* (Bartholomew of Lucca, *Historia ecclesiastica nova : nebst Fortsetzungen bis 1329/Tholomeus von Lucca*, ed. Ottavio Clavuot, MHG SS 39 (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2009)) and Martin Polonus’s *Chronica Pontificum et Imperatorum*.

years.¹ During the time of Pope Innocent III many Christians subjected themselves to harsh penitence and fasting and because they scourged themselves with whips in their desire for absolution they were called flagellants. In the year of our Lord 1202 the rule of the Tartars began. At the same time in Brittany in a town called Rozay-en-Brie, God caused a miracle to be witnessed at an altar. While a priest was handling God's body the bread changed into flesh and the wine into blood in the sight of all. This was to encourage those who doubted. Another miracle took place in Vermandois, where a dead knight was brought back to life, correctly predicted many things to come in the future and afterwards lived for a long time without eating or drinking. On the feast day of St John the Baptist there was a dew of honey in Gaul, which became so mixed up with the corn that anyone who ate the corn tasted the honey. In Arras a tremendous hail and thunderstorm struck during the harvest with such huge hail-stones that they battered down vineyards, trees and corn across the whole region and destroyed the harvest. At that time the tyrant Almivulus,² the emperor of the Saracen, came to Spain with innumerable men, announcing to all and sundry that he would wage war against anyone who worshipped the crucified God. This arrogant mockery so provoked the kings of Spain that they fought against him, defeated him, and slaughtered so many Saracens that their blood flowed across the country like a torrent. Almivulus was put to shame and fled back to his country followed by a few of his men. In the year of our Lord 1204 Livonia was converted to the faith through the achievements of Pope Innocent III.³ In the year of our Lord 1207 St Elizabeth was born, Honorius II became pope and Frederick II was emperor.

¹ Baldwin I (1172–1205) was one of the leaders of the Fourth Crusade. He became the first emperor of the Latin Empire of Constantinople after the city was captured in 1204, and not 1200 as given by Jeroschin.

² Almimolinus in Dusburg is amended by Jeroschin to Almivulus. The term appears to be a corruption of the term used for the Caliph al-Nasir in the Spanish chronicles – 'miramamolin' – and Almohad, the dynasty of the leaders of the Muslim Berbers to which he belonged. The passage refers to the battle at Navas de Tolosa (1212) at which the Almohad army suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of a coalition of Christians led by Alfonso VIII of Castile. The battle was a crucial turning point in the Reconquista.

³ Attempts to convert Livonia to Christianity had begun with the mission of Meinhard von Segeberg in 1184. He was consecrated as bishop in 1186 and died in 1196. In 1193 Celestine III preached a crusade against the pagans in northern Europe and Meinhard's successor, Berthold of Hanover, arrived with a large force of crusaders in 1198 but was killed shortly afterwards. In 1199 Innocent III preached a crusade to avenge his defeat and consecrated Albrecht von Buxhövdén as bishop. He arrived with a large force of crusaders in 1200 and established his bishopric in Riga in 1201. The following year he established the Sword Brothers to assist in the conversion of the pagans and in securing the area. The Livonians were deemed to have been converted when their leader, Caupo, was defeated in 1206.

This is when these orders were founded**Lines 1,334–423; IV, 14**

It is worth noting that over five hundred years after a virgin gave birth to Christ, the Benedictine Order was founded. According to my sources, Felix III was pope at the time. After this, in the 900th year after the birth of our Lord, came the Order of Cluny. At this time Hadrian II was pope. The worthy Carthusian Order was inaugurated in 1082 during the papacy of Victor III. The Grey Order¹ came into being in the year of our Lord 1097. After this the Order of St John also came into being, in 1104 during the papacy of Urban II.² In the year of our Lord 1112 the Order of the Temple was inaugurated when the worthy Pascal II was pope. This order existed for a long time until Pope Clement V broke it up and completely destroyed it. This order was proscribed at the council of Vienne, convened by the pope on 22 March in the year of our Lord 1312 in the seventh year of his papacy. The order was not condemned by a court of law, but the pope far-sightedly limited its power. Henry VII was emperor at that time. The Order of the German House came into being in the year of our Lord 1190; Celestine II was pope, Henry VI was the emperor. The Order of Preachers³ was founded in the year of our Lord 1216. Honorius II was pope. During this pope's papacy the Order of the Friars Minor⁴ was founded in the year of Lord 1223. The Order of the Hermits, also known as the Carmelites and the Order of Vallis Sclarium were permanently founded by this same pope.

Digression [continued]**Lines 1,424–97; IV, 15–20**

In the year of our Lord 1221 the virginal Lady Elizabeth married the landgrave of Thuringia because God willed that this branch of the nobility should bear fruit to his praise and honour.⁵ From the year of our Lord 1225 comes the story of a great

¹ More commonly known now as the Cistercian Order.

² The Knights Hospitaller or Order of St John was in fact formally founded in 1113 on the authority of Pope Pascal II (d. 1118). He was the successor to Urban II, who died in 1099.

³ Now more commonly known as the Dominicans.

⁴ Now more commonly known as the Franciscans.

⁵ St Elizabeth (1207–31) was the daughter of King Andrew of Hungary. At the age of 14 she was married to Ludwig IV of Thuringia, a supporter of Emperor Frederick. Her husband died en route to the Sixth Crusade and she herself became influenced by the pietistic movement. Taking Francis of Assisi as her model and with Konrad von Marburg as her spiritual guide, she used her widow's inheritance build a hospital in Marburg. After her death in 1231, her brother-in-law, Konrad of Thuringia, later grand master of the order, arranged for the hospital and associated rights of lordship to go to the Teutonic Order.

miracle that took place in a mountain range at Salins in Burgundy. It happened like this: one mountain separated itself from its mountain range during an earthquake, moved across to other mountains far away, and in the meantime silted up the whole valley, in which it is said 5,000 people were suffocated to death. Twelve hundred and twenty seven years having passed since the pure Virgin gave birth to Christ, St Elizabeth's husband, the landgrave, set off wearing the sign of the cross, as his pious nature required of him, on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where he was so badly injured that he succumbed to a fever on the return journey and passed away on the feast day of Prothus and Jacinthus, 11 September, in a city called Otranto in Sicily.¹ Pope Gregory IX and Emperor Frederick II wore the crowns in this world. In the year of our Lord 1228 two factions emerged in Italy; the Guelphs and the Ghibellines. These are the names of two brothers who came into dispute at this time. The Guelphs supported the church while the Ghibellines took the side of the empire and protected it. In the year of our Lord 1230 the king of Aragon came to Spain and took by force the islands known as Majorca and Minorca, which at that time were occupied by the enemy Saracen.

She was canonised by Pope Gregory IX in 1235 for her charitable works and is one of the foremost female figures associated with the order. See Hartmut Boockmann in Arnold, *Hochmeister*, pp.17–21.

¹ Otranto is in fact in Apulia.

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Book 2

Here ends the first part of this book and the second part begins, concerning the arrival of the brothers in Prussia
Lines 1,498–575; II, 1

Here ends the first part. Now dear God, give me the grace to rhyme my way through the second part too, in praise of you and your mother. Guide my thoughts, Lord, so that I can make known the worthy arrival of the Teutonic Brethren in Prussia.

In the days when the great and noble prince Duke Conrad, a good Christian, was lord over the lands of Masovia, Kujavia and Poland,¹ there was also a bishop, whom the papal court had sent to Prussia to convert the country and watch over its spiritual affairs as a pastor. This bishop was a member of the Cistercian Order called Christian. In God's name he devotedly sowed the seed of God's teachings among the Prussian people, whom he exhorted to give up their idols and submit to the commandments of the true God Jesus Christ and worship Him.² But because the good seed did not fall on good ground it did not bear any fruit.³ Their evil, sinful wickedness had made them so stubborn that no teaching or exhortation or blessing could move them from their error or take away their false belief. Although their

¹ Conrad of Masovia (1187–1247) became duke of Masovia in 1199 and of Kujavia in 1202. Kujavia occupies the land on the left bank of the Vistula south of Gdańsk-Pommerania and the Kulmerland on the right bank of the Vistula. Masovia adjoined it to the south and east. The territories shared a border with Prussian territory to the north and were subjected to raids by the Prussians. Conrad made several attempts to conquer and pacify the Prussians: in 1209 he conducted a crusade against them and in 1228, along with the bishop of Płock, he founded the Order of Dobrin (Dobrzyń). He began negotiating with the Teutonic Order in 1226, before granting the Charter of Kruszwica (German: Kruschwitz) to the order in 1230. See Eric Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades* (London: Penguin, 1997), pp. 82–3 and Klaus Miltzer, *Die Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005), pp. 63–4.

² Christian's mission began in 1205. In 1215 he became bishop of Prussia, but was forced out by an uprising in 1216. See Christiansen, *Northern Crusades*, pp. 80, 83. His was the latest in a number of attempts by the church and the rulers of Poland to convert the Prussians. Adalbert of Prague and Brun of Querfurt were the earliest missionaries and were martyred by the Prussians in 997 and 1009 respectively. Scenes from Adalbert's life are depicted on the bronze doors of Gniezno Cathedral, which were made in 1175, and he later became patron saint of Poland. The Polish King Bolesław III (1146–73) also led unsuccessful crusades against the Prussians.

³ Matthew 13; Mark 4; Luke 8.

minds were so set, there was one praiseworthy thing about them, because even if they themselves were inured to the faith and practised the worship of all manner of idols, nonetheless they lived at peace with the Christians who had settled alongside them during these years and allowed them to worship the living God without any interference. This upset the evil enemy who always opposes true peace and is jealous of all good things, so he did not suffer this state of affairs for long. He threw the seeds of hate among them, precipitating a violent feud between them, during which the Christians suffered great anguish and distress. Some of them were killed and some driven off into slavery among the Prussians. Some made good their escape, but only a very small number. Thus the devil's jealousy created a situation in which in a few years the Kulmerland¹ was so completely destroyed and burned out by the Prussians that it remained like a desert for some time.

Of the devastation of Polish lands

Lines 1,576–675; II, 2

Because Duke Conrad did not at first oppose their thirst for violence and repay it appropriately, their hatred became even more evident and they attacked Poland with a large army. They inflicted great damage on the country. They looted and burned; they put all the men they came across to the sword and drove the women and children away into perpetual captivity.² If there was a pregnant woman, so heavy with child that she could not keep up with them, they became angry with her and killed her and her child. They roughly wrenched the children out of the arms of their mothers and impaled them here and there on stakes, where they struggled and screamed in pain, and writhed in agony until they died. They devastated the duke's land so completely that of all of the fortresses large and small through which he imposed his control, only one on the Vistula, known as Plock, was left under his command. At the same time these dogs also destroyed a good three hundred parish churches, not counting many beautiful minsters in which many people, both laymen and clerics, were active in the service of God. Many chapels, monasteries and convents were burned to the ground. They slaughtered all the priests and other clerics who belonged to orders or lived in the world that they came across, inside and outside the churches. They rampaged far and wide across the territory. They killed many priests at the altar while they were handling Christ's body and blood. What is more, to dishonour and defile God, in their frenzy they threw Christ's dear, sweet body and His good blood onto the ground and trampled it with their feet.

¹ This is a region in Poland named after the city of Chełmno (German: Kulm), bounded by the Vistula and Drwęca (German: Drewenz) rivers.

² According to general custom on both sides, prisoners taken on raids were kept as slaves. Women and children captured on Prussian raids worked as slaves for the Prussian nobles. There is also some evidence of a trade in slaves in the region: see William Urban, *The Teutonic Knights. A Military History* (London: Greenhill Books, 2005), p. 48.

This was not the end of the trouble caused by these foul people. In their hatred they carried off the chalices and vessels and all manner of church goods, as well as the cloths for covering the sacrament and all that was needed for celebrating God, and misused them. Girls were also mistreated, not just those living in the world, but also those who were dedicated to God, because the devil's hordes dragged them by force in great distress from their cloisters and shamelessly did as they wanted with them. To cut this story short, they committed so many profane, evil and malicious acts against the faith and against Christians that no-one can fully do justice to describing it.

**This chapter concerns the gifts the duke gave the Prussians to placate them
Lines 1,676–711; II, 3**

Before Poland was completely devastated by the Prussians, as I have read, and while there was still something left in the country, Duke Conrad was so hard pressed by them and so afraid of them that whenever they sent emissaries demanding horses or fine clothing he had to give in and did not dare refuse them anything. Therefore when he had nothing more to offer them to satisfy their demands, his lack of resources compelled him to adopt this strategy: he invited his nobles and their wives and others to a social gathering and when the guests were seated and eating and drinking cheerfully he sent the Prussian emissaries what they demanded: he secretly gave them his guests' clothes and horses and let them escape. But all this was wasted effort because it did not placate their fury. They redoubled their efforts to destroy his whole country, as I have described.

**This chapter is about the brothers of the Order of Christ known as the
Sword Brothers
Lines 1,712–785; II, 4**

When the duke saw his country suffering so grievously and being so totally devastated, and was unable to prevent it, on the advice of Brother Christian, the bishop of Prussia, and also of some of the greatest lords at his court who were able to advise on what was best for him and for them, I read that he then called on brothers known as the Knights of Christ to come and protect his land.¹ These knights wore a white mantel with a red sword and stars on it. These bold knights were in Livonia at this time, where they engaged in many battles against the heathens and where

¹ This order, also known as the Brothers of Dobrin (Polish: Dobrzyń), is misleadingly referred to here by Jeroschin as the Sword Brothers. The Sword Brothers were established in Livonia in 1202 by Bishop Albert of Buxhövdén. The Brothers of Dobrin were established by Conrad in 1228 but they enjoyed little success and were absorbed into the Teutonic Order in 1235. See Nowak, 'Milites Christi de Prussia', pp. 339–52.

they had brought many of their lands under the control of the faith by force. The bishop chose one wise man, Bruno, and gave him the robes of the order. Fourteen others also took the habit of the order along with him. After this the duke had the brothers build a castle on his land. The castle was called Dobrin and afterwards while they lived there the knights were known as the Brothers of Dobrin. He also gave them their own lands down in Kujavia, a place called Szadłowice. The duke also came to an agreement with the brothers that any heathen lands which they took by force of arms, and from which with God's help they were able to eject the heathens, would be divided equally between the duke and the order and be theirs to hold in perpetuity. When this became known to the Prussians it enraged them even more than before against the Christians. So they marched on the castle at Dobrin with a great army and launched repeated ferocious attacks. They posed such a threat and were so hostile that the brothers seldom dared venture out of the castle, to the point where four or five of the Prussians could slaughter and capture Christians close to the castle and carry out their raids with impunity.

This is how the lands of Prussia, Kulm and Löbau came to be given to the brothers of the Order of the German House in Jerusalem
Lines 1,786–2,003; II, 5

By this time the far-sighted planning of Grand Master Brother Hermann von Salza had so strengthened the Teutonic Order that it had many members and such power, riches and honour that word of its fame and good reputation had spread the length and breadth of the empire. Its reputation for brave exploits had spread so far that Duke Conrad of Masovia heard of it too. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit he conceived an unshakeable desire to bring these brothers to his land to protect it, so that they could fight to relieve the Christians of heathen attacks and to damage the heathens, because the Sword Brothers were not having any success in these matters. So he called to his court all the bishops and noblemen who could be persuaded to come, revealed his intentions to them and asked their opinion. When the lords heard what he had in mind they thought it was a good idea and agreed whole-heartedly. They said: 'It is clear from what we have heard in reliable reports that the Teutonic Brethren are the enemies of the enemies of the faith and exemplary knights, bold heroes in the use of weapons and fighting from their youth. We also know that they are held in high esteem by the pope and the emperor and the princes in Germany. Therefore we are confident, that if they request it, the pope will call a crusade by which this poor land will be restored to peace and released from danger.' Then all the noblemen and the duke decided that he would speedily send out high-ranking emissaries with solemn letters of introduction to Grand Master Hermann. When the message was presented to him and his brothers the master weighed up the issues very seriously in a series of meetings. Finally the pope and the emperor, who at that time was Frederick II, and many princes and lords of German lands who promised to support and advise him in this matter,

counselled the master to accede to Conrad's plea. So Master Hermann sent Brother Konrad von Landsberg and another brother delegated to accompany him and these two went to the duke of Poland so that they could investigate the Kulmerland and discover whether the emissaries had conveyed his wishes correctly. According to what I have read, when the brothers arrived in Poland the duke had left to see to affairs some distance away. At this precise time a dispute broke out: a great many Prussians came and carried out raids to devastating effect across the entire land, robbing and burning. The brothers assembled a large group of Poles at the request of Lady Agafia, the Duchess, and began to attack the Prussian army, which fought back fiercely. In the first encounter in the campaign the Poles took flight, the brothers were seriously wounded and the Polish commander was taken prisoner. In addition many Poles were killed. When the immediate danger had passed the brothers were found left for dead on the battlefield. Lady Agafia had them brought to a place of safety and gave them the best care and doctors who healed their wounds. When they were healthy again they prudently set about the task with which they had been entrusted. When Duke Conrad received their report, after mature deliberation and with the advice of counsellors, as we have described before, of his own free will and without any reservations, and with the support of his wife, the Duchess Agafia, and his sons Bolesław, Casimir and Siemowit he gave the Teutonic Order the following lands to possess in perpetuity: the first is known as Kulm¹ and the second as Löbau,² and in addition all the lands which they might conquer thereafter with the help of God and take from the control of the heathens, with all the rights and uses which he and his family had possessed and handed down from the beginning of time. Of his own free will, along with his wife and children named above, he relinquished all claim to rights of lordship and all rights of possession to the lands we have named. And so that the donation might be strengthened for all time and no man or woman could argue against it or breach its terms, and to secure it completely, the duke prepared documents for the brothers setting out the agreement, and guaranteed them with his seal, without a single reservation. These matters were decided in the year of our Lord 1226. They were finalised by many lords and people who acted as witnesses and advisers, some of whom I will name here: bishops Gunter of Masovia, Michael of Kujavia and Christian of Prussia, Provost Gernuld, Dean William and Pacosław the Elder and the Younger of Tczew. Also among them were John the Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor Gregory, and as I said before, many more honourable men were involved in this matter, so many that there are too many for me to write about.³

¹ Modern Chełmno, Poland.

² Modern Lubawa, Poland.

³ The authenticity of the Treaty of Kruszwica (German: Kruschwitz), described here, is the basis of the order's subsequent claims to the region. It has been disputed but recent Polish research has established its authenticity: see Dariusz Sikorski, 'Neue Erkenntnisse über das Kruschwitzer Privileg' in *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*, 51 (2002), pp. 317–50. It was agreed in 1230, not 1226, although negotiations had taken place in Borgo

**Of the confirmation of the matters discussed above and the exhortation
given to the brothers by the pope
Lines 2,004–129; II, 6**

When Duke Conrad, of whom you have by now heard a great deal, complained pitifully to the curia at Rome about the inhuman acts of the heathens and the lamentable distress caused to his lands, Pope Gregory IX listened to their complaints, took pity on the poor Christians in Polish lands and wanted to save them from the dangers and distress which tormented their lives. According to what I have read, everything which had been ordained and given to the brothers of the German House by the duke was confirmed by the pope in the name of our Lord.¹ The pope commanded that to obtain absolution of all their sins, the brothers should take revenge for these wrongs with all their might and avenge the crucified Lord with the ferocious persecution of the heathens, and return to the control of Christianity the regions and the lands which were rightfully theirs but which had been occupied by the heathens. He began to exhort the brothers to join battle with these gracious words: ‘Sons, gird on your swords and be strong; always be ready to join battle against the evil people who want to destroy us and what we hold sacred, for it is better to die in battle than to watch as our people and everything we hold sacred are grievously defiled.’² He also ardently encouraged them to be brave in the words God had spoken to the army of the Israelites in days gone by: ‘When you go forth in battle against your adversaries, if you see they are more numerous and their wagons and riders are mightier than yours, do not be afraid of them, because God your Lord is with you.’³ In the same place there is another passage with which he reassured them: ‘Today in truth you will enter into fierce battle with your enemies. Do not be afraid; do not fear them and do not falter because God is in the midst of you.’⁴ This great courage was given in full measure to Judas Maccabeus who held off countless heathens with a small army. With unfaltering courage he encouraged his own men by saying to them: ‘Do not be afraid of their numbers and do not take fright at their attack. Think of how our ancestors were saved in the Red Sea when Pharaoh and his army were pursuing them. Let us cry to the heavens and our Lord will take pity on us, His poor people. He will remember how He pledged himself to our fathers and today before our eyes He

San Donnino in this year, during which the emperor is thought to have given his support to the conquest of Prussia by the Teutonic Order in the presence of Conrad’s emissaries, the grand master and princes of the empire. See Militzer, *Geschichte*, pp. 63–4.

¹ Scholz and Wojtecki, *Chronik des Preussenlandes*, p. 65, tentatively identify these passages with the bulls issued by the pope on 12 September and 18 January 1230 (PUB 1,1 no. 72) and the prologue of the order’s rule; see *Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens*, ed. Max Perlach (Halle: Niemeyer, 1890; republished Hildesheim: Olms, 1975), p. 24.

² 1 Maccabees 3, 5.

³ Deuteronomy 20, 1.

⁴ Deuteronomy 20, 3.

will wipe out this entire army so that everyone knows that God alone can save and rescue whoever he wants to.¹ And do not be afraid of the words of a sinful man, because all his treasured honour is like dust and a snake. Today he stands as tall as a tower; tomorrow he has disappeared without trace.² Therefore, dear sons, love honour at all times and boldly risk your life in battle for the sake of our fathers' inheritance. Hold fast to the memory of what your ancestors did in their lifetime; in this way you will earn great honour and your name will be praised for ever.³ Noble heroes, take courage and be bold. Do not fear any harm and act bravely at all times, for in this way you will be fulfilling the commandments which God gave you and will gain everlasting honour. Gather together all those who honour the truth, avenge the sufferings of your people and with a strong hand pay back the wicked heathens.⁴

Concerning the new battle of the Brothers of the Teutonic House against the heathens

Lines 2,130–273; II, 7

As historians tell us, in the old days there have been many battles against the Prussians: by Julius Caesar, by the nine brothers from Sweden called Gampti, by Lord Hugo von Potyre⁵ as I have read, and most recently by Bishop Christian of Prussia, whom we have mentioned before, who often fought with them, and the Sword Brothers, whom we have also discussed, known as the Brothers of Dobrin. But if anyone tried to subjugate the Prussians they either killed the leader and anyone else who wielded power or drove them off so far away that they were not in a position to inflict damage on them. In this cunning way they were able to throw off the yoke of slavery and servitude the Christians imposed on them and continue in their erring ways. But now the brave Teutonic Brethren began to fight them with the assurance of a new form of warfare. These are the new battles which God has instituted to tear down the gates of the enemy everywhere.⁶ If the Prussians murder

¹ 1 Maccabees 4, 8.

² 1 Maccabees 2, 62.

³ 1 Maccabees 2, 50.

⁴ 1 Maccabees 2, 67–68.

⁵ These were Swedish settlers and a German folk hero who, according to legend, fought the Prussians during the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. See Daniel Gralath, *Versuch einer Geschichte Danzigs aus zuverlässigen Quellen und Handschriften*, vol. 2 (Königsberg: Hartung, 1790), p. 20.

⁶ This echoes the document '*de laude novae militiae*' written by Bernard of Clairvaux in support of the newly formed Order of the Temple, which subsequently became the blueprint for the military orders. See Bernard of Clairvaux, *Liber ad milites Templi de laude novae militiae*, ed. J. Leclercq and H. M. Rochais, in *S. Bernardi Opera*, vol. 3 (Rome, 1963), pp. 206–39, and Josef Fleckenstein, 'Die Rechtfertigung der geistlichen Ritterorden

one or more of their leaders one day, they are replaced that same day with men who are as good or better. And theirs is not just a new war, but it is distinguished by being a new form of warfare, for the enemy is overcome not only with physical weapons but also with spiritual weapons, like prayer. We read that Moses prayed while the Israelite army was fighting the Amalekites and the army was victorious while he was praying and when he stopped praying the Amalekites won.¹ Solomon refers to the same thing speaking about Moses in the Book of Wisdom, when he says of him that he defeated the army not by force of arms or by physical strength but by words of prayer.² And the Book of Judges speaks of him in the same way: 'Think of God's warrior who overcame the armies of Amalek, who in their arrogance put their trust in their shields, not by fighting but by the entreaties of his prayer.'³ We also read that the Maccabees prayed and that the army of their enemies fled in disarray.⁴ Furthermore we read that Judas Maccabeus did not pray during two battles and they went badly for him.⁵ He was not victorious against Antiochus Eupator but had to retreat. In the second case this is what happened: Bacchides and Alcimus attacked him in force. In spite of the danger Judas was undaunted and as brave as a lion and inflicted much damage on them. He caused great distress to the enemy that day, killing many of them, but the battle ebbed and flowed until he himself unfortunately fell and the defenceless Israelite army was put to flight. Yet another new form of warfare has been introduced to us which no power can withstand, and that is patient suffering. By enduring, the holy martyrs truly forgot their bodies here and gained their souls in joyfulness with God. A poet speaks of it in this way: 'Endurance is always a noble way of achieving victory; he who suffers patiently will be victorious – if you want to be victorious learn how to endure.' He also wrote elsewhere on endurance: 'Suffering is a great virtue which has brought great victories. It overpowers both armed men and those without arms.' Good St Gregory also speaks thus about suffering: 'We can be martyrs without the pain of iron or flame if we endure suffering with faith in our hearts and minds.'⁶ St Jerome also says: 'Which saint ever won his crown without

nach der Schrift "*De laude novae militiae*" Bernards von Clairvaux', in Josef Fleckenstein and Manfred Hellmann (eds), *Ritterorden*, pp. 9–22.

¹ Exodus 17, 11.

² Wisdom of Solomon 11, 3; 18, 22.

³ Judith 4, 13.

⁴ 1 Maccabees 4, 10.

⁵ 1 Maccabees 6 and 9.

⁶ The references to the works of the Church fathers below are those suggested in the original edition of Jeroschin's work by Ernst Strehle or in the modern German translation of Dusburg's chronicle by Klaus Scholz and Dieter Wojtecki. I have been unable to verify the citations. Jeroschin's editor, Ernst Strehle, identifies this passage as Gregory, *In Evangelia Liber II*, homilia XXXV, cap 7. See SRP 1, p. 328, footnote 2.

suffering meekly.¹ From its cradle the church has never lacked unjust oppression or patient justice. So along with the new battles we also have new warfare by which we can overcome and silence the hordes of the enemy of Christianity and the faith with spiritual armour.

Of physical and spiritual weapons **Lines 2,274–339; II, 8**

In the Song of Songs it is written that all the weaponry needed by a warrior was to be found in David's tower.² It is also written that 60 warriors, chosen from the strongest of the Israelite warriors, skilled in warfare and all worthy of carrying a sword, paced watchfully around Solomon's bed on guard duty. Each of them wore his sword on his hip against any nocturnal dangers; this is a sign to us that the guards of Jesus Christ should always carry weapons, so that they can destroy the enemies of the faith and safeguard the tower of faith from all danger and be diligent in guarding the peace and security of Christianity, which is the bed of the true Solomon.³ But the scriptures show that the lady Judith is praised not for her weapons but for the power of the virtue with which she killed Holofernes: 'Who can expect his bow and his sword to offer him enough protection, or who has been so great and bold that they have been able to possess the world with their sword?'⁴ We should listen to the teachings of the great St Paul on this matter and put on God's weapons, virtues, which alone, as Macrobius has said, can make men blessed in the exercise of them, and protect their owners with true power.⁵ The weapons of virtue shall save us completely from the dangers of the enemy and protect us. Boethius has said: 'We have given you weapons which would have made you invincible if you had not thrown them off.'⁶ Now I will tell you worthy men about the different spiritual and physical weapons which the Holy Scripture mentions, so that you can conduct battles in the new warfare chosen by God, as I explained to you before.

¹ Klaus Scholz and Dieter Wojtecki have identified this as St Jerome, Epistola 22, c 39. See Peter von Dusburg, *Chronik des Preussenlandes*, p. 68, footnote 21.

² Song of Songs 4, 4.

³ Song of Songs 3, 7; see also *Statuten*, ed. Perlbach, p. 25.

⁴ Psalms 44, 6; 44, 3.

⁵ The following sections are based on St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, 6, 10–18.

⁶ Jeroschin's editor, Ernst Strehle, identifies this passage as Boethius, *De consolazione Philosophiae* I pr. 2. See SRP 1, p. 329, footnote 2.

This is about the shield**Lines 2,340–460**

Anyone who wants to join this battle should have a shield above all else. It is written that Solomon had 200 spears made and 300 shields.¹ We also read in Ecclesiastes: ‘The just man in all ages who wants to defeat his enemy should fight them with the shield of the Almighty.’² By the shield we should understand faith, of which St Paul says: ‘At all times hold in front of you the shield of faith, which is the true foundation of all virtue,’³ and without it, as St Augustine tells us, all virtue is useless and becomes dry like a branch that tries to grow without the strength of the trunk which provides the sap.⁴ According to St Paul, it is also impossible for anyone to please God or to be worthy of grace without faith.⁵ But if faith is in our hearts it brings all things to us. Our Lord speaks of it in this way in the gospel: ‘Keep faith wholeheartedly in God, because I truly tell you, if anyone says to a mountain “Pick yourself up and go into the sea” with faith and no doubt in his heart, it will undoubtedly happen.’⁶ See how great the power of faith is. This is the shield, so strong and so victorious, with which King Jehosaphat of Judah went to his people when he saw that they were fearful and comforted them by saying: ‘Trust in the Lord your God. If you do, everything will turn out well for you.’⁷ This is in fact what happened. The Ammonites and Moabites, two peoples who had gathered to attack them, began to attack each other and inflicted such terrible wounds on each other that they were all killed. These friends caused each other great anguish. We also read there that David spoke strong words of faith to Goliath, when he went out to do battle against him. ‘You come here with your sword, shield and spear to do battle with me; I come to face you in the name of our Lord.’⁸ Then they joined battle and God gave Goliath at once into David’s power and he struck him down dead. Great faith was also enough for Saul’s son Jonathan and Judas Maccabeus, each of whom said in their day: ‘Nothing is too much for God. He can help whomever He wants, against a great or a small army.’⁹ Secure in his faith, Jonathan and his spear carrier fought alone against the army of the Philistines and killed 20 of them, strewing their bodies across half an acre. This made the people

¹ 2 Chronicles 9, 15.

² Ecclesiasticus 29, 13.

³ Ephesians 6, 16.

⁴ This passage appears not to be from the writings of St Augustine but from St Gregory. Klaus Scholz and Dieter Wojtecki have identified it as St Gregory, *Letters*, lib. IV ep. 38. See Peter von Dusburg, *Chronik des Preussenlandes*, p. 71, footnote 34.

⁵ Hebrews 11, 6.

⁶ Mark 11, 22–23.

⁷ 2 Chronicles 20, 20.

⁸ 2 Samuel 17, 45.

⁹ 1 Maccabees 3, 18.

pale with shock and they fled.¹ Judas also killed Seron and destroyed all his army through the power of faith.² This is the victory with which one can overcome the world. Who can achieve this victory, however, other than he who believes that Jesus Christ is the son of God?³ Our Lord says: 'If anyone believes in me, even if he loses his life, he will receive it back again.'⁴ Read the Scriptures with a receptive mind from beginning to end and you will find that wherever we read that our Lord used his power to heal body and soul, he always concludes with the words, 'Your faith has made you whole again.' This is your shield.

About the sword **Lines 2,461–505**

Now take the sword as your defence in battle. I have read that Jeremiah gave the sword to Judas and said to him: 'See, now take this holy sword as a gift from God, so that you cannot fail to subdue the enemies of the people of Israel and destroy their honour.'⁵ This is the sword which Judas used to protect and safeguard the armies of the Israelites. Good knights, carry this sword as Saul carried his, which never returned unused, wherever it was swung, so that the words of the Scriptures about God's enemies are fulfilled: 'The sword attacks young girls and boys, old people and babies from outside, while fear attacks them from within'⁶ and they always say wherever they are in danger, 'What is oppressing us is nothing other than Gideon's sword.'⁷ That is the power of Christian knighthood. The sword represents good deeds, because faith without deeds is lifeless.⁸ Some weapons only protect the body from danger. The sword means those deeds which destroy the enemy; and because the sword is sharp and cuts on both sides of the blade, so the good deeds on one hand protect the perpetrators from the pains of hell and on the other hand lead them to the joys which no man can fully describe.

About the spear **Lines 2,506–541**

Now take the third weapon for battle: the spear. The Scriptures write that the priest Jehoiada gave a spear to the men whom he had designated captains of the watch

¹ 1 Samuel 14, 14.

² 1 Maccabees 3, 23.

³ 1 John 5, 5.

⁴ John 11, 25.

⁵ 2 Maccabees 15, 16.

⁶ Deuteronomy 32, 25.

⁷ Judges 7, 14.

⁸ James 2, 20.

which guarded the house of God.¹ Joab, a prince among the knights, drove this spear into Absalom's heart and in this way took revenge on him for his persecution of his father, King David.² The righteous spear stands for good intentions, as St Paul teaches: 'Whatever you do, make sure that you do it in God's name, be it in words or deeds, or however you do it: eating or drinking, waking or sleeping and whatever else you do, be sure your intentions are good and bring praise and honour to God.'³ This spear illustrates the benefits and disadvantages of every deed, in this sense: evil intentions can never produce good works; conversely good intentions will not produce evil deeds.

About the buckler **Lines 2,542–599**

The buckler is your fourth weapon. It is described truthfully in Isaiah: 'Set to, princes, take up the shield.'⁴ God also said these words to Joshua: 'Take the shield you have in your hand and lift it high and take a stand against the city called Hay; I will give it to you straightaway.'⁵ After this it is also written that Joshua did not withdraw the hand holding the shield until he had with difficulty slaughtered all the inhabitants of Hay. This is how all noble warriors should carry their shields; they should not ever throw it away, as Saul did, of whom we read that his shield was cravenly discarded on the field of battle as if he had never been made king or consecrated and anointed.⁶ The shield means God's word, which teaches you how to persist in good works, and has been described like this: 'God's word is without doubt a fiery shield for all who receive it with hope.'⁷ The shield is described as 'fiery' because it deflects and always protects us from the burning arrows the devil fires. The scripture reveals that Judas Maccabeus did not arm all his men with the protection of shield or spear, but fortified them for battle with the best words he knew from God, which are justifiably called the best, because God's word does exactly as it pleases; it benefits all who receive it. If it is ineffective in one it flourishes in the next person; it never returns without achieving its aim.⁸

¹ 2 Chronicles 23, 9.

² 2 Samuel 18, 14.

³ Colossians 3, 17.

⁴ Isaiah 21, 5.

⁵ Joshua 8, 18.

⁶ 2 Samuel 1, 21.

⁷ Proverbs 30, 5.

⁸ 2 Maccabees 15, 11; Isaiah 55, 11.

About the breastplate¹ Lines 2,600–51

Take up the breastplate as the fifth weapon in the deeds of warfare. It is written that Judas Maccabeus like a giant put on a well-made breastplate and protected his land.² For breastplate we should understand righteousness, of which St Paul says: ‘Be advised that you should put on the breastplate of righteousness’.³ Righteousness is such that it gives itself unsparingly to each according to his deserts. To God it gives humble submission (of this he says we should fulfil all righteousness⁴); to the next it gives compassion, of which St Gregory says: ‘True justice always has compassion, false justice shows contempt’.⁵ It is in control of the flesh, which should always be under the yoke of the soul. Ecclesiastes teaches about this: ‘Son, if you want to go into the service of God, be steadfast in righteousness’.⁶ It also says: ‘Suffer for the sake of righteousness for the good of your soul and fight to the death for justice; because God will then also fight powerfully on your side against your enemies’.⁷ In this way the words of David will be fulfilled: ‘Justice and peace are chastely entwined’;⁸ otherwise there can be no peace. Instead the flesh will always lust against the interests of the spirit. Conversely the spirit desires what the flesh does not’.⁹

About the bow and quiver Lines 2,652–57

The bow and quiver also belong to the trappings of warfare. Isaac said to his son Esau: ‘Take your bow and quiver to defend yourself’.¹⁰

¹ The German here has *halsberc*, which normally refers to a coat of mail or hauberk. The term ‘breastplate’ is used here because it is the familiar English translation of these biblical passages.

² 1 Maccabees 3, 3.

³ Ephesians 6, 14.

⁴ Matthew 3, 15.

⁵ Jeroschin’s editor, Ernst Strehle, identifies this passage as Gregory, *In Evangelia Liber II*, homilia 34 c.2. See SRP 1, p. 332, footnote 1.

⁶ Ecclesiasticus 2, 1.

⁷ Ecclesiasticus 4, 28.

⁸ Psalm 85, 10.

⁹ Galatians 5, 17.

¹⁰ Genesis 27, 3.

About the arrow**Lines 2,658–2,871**

Arrows also belong here, if our aim is to confound our enemy. I have read that Isaiah said of arrows: ‘The lord’s wisdom stirred up the king of the Medes against Babylon’.¹ It is fitting that you should fill the quivers with arrows, so that in these days God may avenge the enemies of His cross through you, as He said in Deuteronomy: ‘I will heap evil and woe on them and will ceaselessly torment them with arrows.’² We can take another meaning from these three, bow, quiver and arrow, and picture three things which must be the foundation of any spiritual life. These are obedience, poverty and chastity.³ Obedience resembles a bow; for when the bow is drawn, bent and bowed and yet remains unbroken, so every spiritual man should train himself to bear good and evil, comfort and pain with equanimity and without complaint and obediently allow himself to be bent and bowed. Isaac spoke of bending in obedience when he was looking after Jacob: ‘All your mother’s sons bow down before you. You are lord over your brothers.’⁴ The obedient man can say with Jeremiah, ‘The Lord has bent his bow and set me as a mark for the arrow’.⁵ A bow being bent is like a man of God facing death in battle and not deigning to avoid it. That is obedience, which is worthy of praise and better than any sacrifice, because as Gregory reveals, ‘Sacrifice kills others, in obedience we go to our own death’.⁶ Arrows symbolise chastity, because just as someone who is shooting an arrow must take note of his target, so anyone who wishes to live a chaste life must know how to withstand the desires of the flesh, which are always inclined towards sin. And in the same way that arrows are set in flight by being shot, and not by their own power, so it is with chastity. No-one can live chastely unless God gives him the gift. The arrow also flies like a bird with two feathers in its shaft, to fell the enemy quickly. So chastity also has two arrows which completely confound the powers of the evil old dragon, its enemy. These two feathers are renewal of old life and the benefits of renewal. Isaiah says about the meaning of these two feathers: ‘Those who have put their faith in God will transform their physical power into spiritual power and take to flight like an eagle, because since he seeks renewal, he will lose his old plumage and take up a new one’.⁷ Paul exhorts us to this kind of renewal when he says: ‘Put off the old person, with his old habits, who alters by being led astray, and put on the new

¹ Jeremiah 51, 11.

² Deuteronomy 32, 23.

³ See the Rule, *Statuten*, ed. Perlbach, p. 29.

⁴ Genesis 27, 29.

⁵ Lamentations 3, 12.

⁶ Klaus Scholz and Dieter Wojtecki have identified this reference as St Gregory, *Moralia in Job*, lib xxxv c. 28. See See Peter von Dusburg, *Chronik des Preussenlandes*, p. 71, footnote 76.

⁷ Isaiah 40, 31.

person who can be formed in holiness and virtue in the image of God'.¹ In this way you will be new again like the eagle; you will fly swiftly without tiring in the virtue of chastity, because Jonathan's arrows never turned back.² The flesh of the chaste man can lament with Job when it is tormented by pain; 'God's arrows are in me; anger is draining my spirit of its store of unchaste feelings'.³ Chastity and lust are always engaged in angry confrontation and tremendous battles; no-one understands this as well as those who have experienced it. St Bernard says of the benefits of renewal: 'What is more glorious than pure chastity, which makes pure that which comes from filth? It makes the enemy our friend. Its fruit grows so high that anyone who leans against its stem becomes an angel.' We also read of the lady Judith that she boldly killed Holofernes and rescued God's people from danger. She attained salvation because she wanted to live chastely. 'O how beautiful and wonderfully useful is a noble, chaste race.'⁴ The quiver signifies poverty, because as the arrow is kept inside within the folds of the quiver, in the same way chastity is hidden and preserved by poverty. A chaste man can say with Isaiah: 'God has made me like His chosen arrow and has hidden me within His quiver'.⁵ However, the poverty described by St Bernard is not enough for members of clerical orders: 'They want to carry the yoke of poverty in such a way that they lack nothing and love poverty in such a way that they are able to keep all their possessions'.⁶ Instead they must conform to the kind of poverty of which Christ spoke in the Gospels: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit'.⁷ So poverty should be like the poverty St Bernard spoke of, honest in its intentions and its spiritual desire only to please God to secure the salvation of the soul.⁸ Hadarezer's men's quivers, which King David took to Jerusalem, were the correct kind. The name Hadarezer means 'excellent divider' and signifies poverty, which separates us from riches.⁹ David spoke wisely. He was fair of face and represented our Lord Christ whose face is so beautiful and wonderful that the angels always delight in looking at it. Christ carried the quiver of poverty in great torment to Jerusalem, where to save our souls He hung naked on the cross, so we go where He went and willingly follow His poverty. This freely accepted poverty is a medicine, as Gregory said: 'Those who are harmed by an

¹ Ephesians 4, 22–24.

² Psalm 103, 5; 2 Samuel 1, 22.

³ Job 6, 4.

⁴ Wisdom of Solomon 4, 1.

⁵ Isaiah 49, 2.

⁶ Klaus Scholz and Dieter Wojtecki have identified this reference as Bernhard, In adventu Domini Sermo IV, 5. See Peter von Dusburg, *Chronik des Preussenlandes*, p. 80, footnote 88.

⁷ Matthew 5, 3.

⁸ Klaus Scholz and Dieter Wojtecki have identified this reference as Bernhard, In festo omnium sanctorum sermo I, 8. See Peter von Dusburg, *Chronik des Preussenlandes*, p. 81, footnote 90.

⁹ 1 Chronicles 18, 7.

illness of morality are healed by the medicine of poverty.¹ Poverty kills arrogance with its unpleasant taste and suffocates these two hellish leeches, depravity and avarice, with its virtue.

Lines 2,872–3,057

We should also have a sling if we intend to do battle. I have read that the prophet Zechariah says: ‘Our lord God will protect them and save them from all danger; and they will eat greedily, and he will throw stones at them from a sling and bring them to heel’.² In the Book of Kings we read of the sling: ‘The souls of the enemies of David will be driven round and round in circles as if they were being swung round in the orbit of a sling’.³ When David stepped out against Goliath this is the sling with which he threw such a sharp stone at his forehead that it penetrated his skull and the huge, tall giant fell down unconscious onto his face. In this way the small man, David, was able to overcome a huge giant with a sling and a stone and kill him by himself.⁴ In the new battle you should also have a staff along with the sling. God has spoken of this in the words of Isaiah, as I have heard: ‘Woe to you, Assyrian, the rod of my anger will strike you hard and kill you and my rod will be raised against you as it was in Egypt’.⁵ A spiritual meaning is concealed in the sling and the staff which we should interpret in this way: that David, when he was about to carry out his intention to fight with Goliath, only took his staff with him, which he always carried, five sharp stones which he collected in his pocket and a powerful sling in his hand, and with these he knocked this well-armoured giant to the ground and killed him. The heavily armed giant Goliath signifies the devil, with the weapons of cunning, in his eternal battle against mankind. You, the real penitent, should be like David, for David says your hand should be strong against him, and if you want to survive and defeat him, always carry with you the staff of the Holy Cross and the five stones which signify the five deep wounds the pure Christ suffered in great torment. Put these stones in your pocket, which is to say your heart. You should think of these wounds and the pain of them and swing these thoughts around in your soul with devotion; in this way you will not fail to hit the devil and kill him, that is, destroy his power so completely that he cannot defeat you with any temptation. And if on the advice of Elisha the staff of the Holy Cross is laid quickly and devoutly on the face of the dead child, which is to say a grown man who behaves childishly, with no sense, and whose soul is dead in sin, the dead child is raised from the dead and brought back to life.⁶ If you want to be

¹ This quotation is not from Gregory. Source unknown.

² Zechariah 9, 15.

³ 1 Samuel 25, 29.

⁴ 1 Samuel 17, 49.

⁵ Isaiah 10, 5; 24.

⁶ 2 Kings 4, 29.

fully armed you should also have on your helmets. The Scripture tells us that Saul helped David put on his armour and put a brass helmet on his head.¹ God also speaks through Jeremiah: 'Prepare yourselves for battle, mount your horses, bold horsemen and face them in your helmets'.² The helmet signifies salvation, which is given to the man who virtuously practises these weapons. St Paul says of the helmet: 'Put on the helmet of salvation which is a blessing for you'.³ Isaiah says: 'I saw that the just man was armed with a breastplate and with righteousness and he wore on his head the helmet of salvation'.⁴ O how safe you will be in battle if you are equipped with this armour; for God, who is the eternal lord, will be your salvation until the end of the earth. These are the strong weapons with which the patriarch Jacob captured the lost lands from the Amorites and gave as a gift to his son Joseph.⁵ Using the same weapons the children of Israel succeeded in destroying the inhabitants of the Holy Land and occupying it. David overcame the enemies of his kingdom with them. The Maccabees rebuilt and restored the city of Jerusalem which had been destroyed by the heathens and reconsecrated the Temple which they had defiled with their falsehoods. O strong heroes, o exemplary warriors, you bold men, put on this armour and boldly avenge the injustice and contempt shown to the crucified God and according to His commandments seize back the Holy Land from the control of the evil heathens. They have taken it unjustly, because it belongs to the Christians.⁶ Good noble heroes, be courageous in the battle and do not let your hand falter, because your labour will be rewarded with the reward of which God said to Abraham: 'I myself will be your great reward'.⁷ So if the task daunts you, concentrate on the wonderful reward and you can be sure that just as no misdeed goes unpunished, so truly no virtue is without its reward and He who gives you the virtues will Himself be the reward.

Concerning the use of physical and spiritual weapons **Lines 3,058–392; II, 9**

Six reasons can be established for using spiritual and physical weapons. The first reason is that we must practise warfare according to God's will. This is proved by the fact that in ages past God allowed many heathens to remain among the Israelites so that they could teach the Jews who were not skilled at fighting to fight according to heathen practices. They could then teach their children so that they could

¹ 1 Samuel 17, 38.

² Jeremiah 46, 4.

³ Ephesians 6, 17.

⁴ Isaiah 59, 17.

⁵ Genesis 48, 22.

⁶ *Statuten*, ed. Perlbach, p. 24.

⁷ 2 Chronicles 15, 7; Genesis 15, 1.

afterwards fight the armies of their enemies and were used to bearing arms;¹ because a man who cannot use weapons is not of much use in a battle. Therefore in peacetime you should practise in tournaments and other knightly activities so that if war breaks out and weapons may be used against the enemy, men are well trained for battle and no-one can say as David did to Saul: 'I am not in training to carry weapons',² and is therefore unarmed and has to accept the disgrace of defeat at the hands of the enemy. For man's life on earth is an endless battle, and as soon as he comes into the world he steps onto the battlefield to do battle with the hellish powers of the air, and against this enemy he uses not the weapons which fight physical battles, but power from God. St Paul, God's messenger, reminds us that we should wear God's armour, which is virtue, which God alone gives to make His people powerful and virtuous. We should practise using it so that we can withstand and be strong in the dark days when we are plagued by temptation and so that our virtues increase by dint of practice. John Chrysostom describes it in this way: 'As any skill is gained or increased or maintained with the exercise of the body, in the same way every virtue increases with practice and decreases if it is left idle'.³ The second cause for which we should put on physical weapons is for the pursuit of the enemy. The people of Israel put on all their armour because of the threat of ambush by the enemy, occupied the roads leading towards them and kept watch there day and night. We also read that Judas Maccabeus told the people of Israel they should wear their armour in dangerous places so that they could not be harmed by the enemy's armies if they should attack them.⁴ For the same reason we should also practise the use of spiritual weapons. As St Paul says: 'Be strong in God and the power of his virtue; undaunted put on God's armour so that you can withstand the snares of the devil, who is always lying in wait for us, like a lion in his den'.⁵ This is the lion Peter calls: 'the devil, our enemy, who rushes round looking for someone to devour',⁶ and this is the one whom we should destroy with the virtue of faith. The third reason for putting on physical armour is for open warfare, forced on us by the enemy's hostility. We read of this in the Books of the Maccabees.⁷ The evil Lysias's hopes and deeds were based on the numbers in his army, and he did not give the regard he ought to the power of God. This fool presumptuously intended to destroy the good city of Jerusalem. When he and his army had reached the outer defences Maccabeus put on his armour; and when the men who were with him saw them, every one of them began to weep and plead to God with passionate tears that He would send them a good angel to come and save them. After they had prayed they felt braver and stronger. They rose up against the enemy and that day killed

¹ Judges 3, 1–2.

² 1 Samuel 17, 39.

³ Quotation unlikely to be from Chrysostom. Source unknown.

⁴ 2 Maccabees 14, 22.

⁵ Ephesians 6, 10; Psalms 10, 9.

⁶ 1 Peter 5, 8.

⁷ 2 Maccabees 11, 4–12.

1,100 foot soldiers and 1,600 horsemen. When the army had turned to flee and many were wounded, there were some who recovered and ran away naked. Lysias also survived by running ignobly away. This is also the reason why the Brothers of the German House from the day they arrived in Prussia until this day have always been in the habit of carrying their swords, so that they are ready to defend themselves in case they are in any danger of open attack or ambush. We also need to use the defence of virtue against the devil's army when it openly attacks us. St Paul says of this: 'We walk in the flesh, but should not fight according to the ways of the flesh, because our armour is not physical (that is, weak) but God has made it strong to destroy the strongholds of the devil (his cunning) and at the same time all his high evil plans (which are the depths) are destroyed if they set themselves up against the coming of God (that is, the faith they want to destroy).'¹ Therefore you should be prepared and willing at all times to fight against the devil with the weapons of virtue, for Paul reveals that our foe the devil has a thousand cunning ways of attacking us and you should resist him at all times in as many ways as he tries to attack.² If he fights you openly or ensnares you with the vice of arrogance use as your defence the virtue of humility which will make him flee from you. Do the same against all the sins with which he tries to tempt you; have counter-virtues in your defence so however he tries to frighten you, you will always be victorious. The fourth reason for arming ourselves is peace: so that we can hold our own possessions in peace. Our Lord Christ said in the Gospels: 'If a strong armed man carefully guards the borders of his lands, everything he owns is secured in peace'.³ Thus we can only have peace when we are armed with virtue, because there can never be peace for the wicked.⁴ A wise man has said of this: 'Those rich people who care for virtue and peace in their household win great honour among their people'.⁵ Baruch said on this subject: 'If you had walked the path of God you would be given a life of peace on earth'.⁶ Solomon says: 'If a man's path pleases God He makes him at peace with all his enemies'.⁷ The fifth reason is that we win back lost property. The Scriptures reveal that the army of Israel put on their armour when they entered the land which God had given to their forefathers and won it back from the hands of the enemy who had subjugated it. So if we have the weapons of virtue we will undoubtedly regain our inheritance, the kingdom of heaven, which we lost through our sinfulness, because virtues are so courageous that they seize hold of it by force, as Christ Himself says: 'The kingdom of heaven

¹ 2 Corinthians 10, 3–5.

² Klaus Scholz and Dieter Wojtecki have identified this reference as Paulinus of Nola, Ep 4 ad Augustinum. See Peter von Dusburg, *Chronik des Preussenlandes*, p. 88, footnote 23.

³ Luke 11, 21.

⁴ Isaiah 48, 22.

⁵ Ecclesiasticus 44, 6.

⁶ Baruch 3, 13.

⁷ Proverbs 16, 7.

suffers violence and men of violence, that is those who hold fast to virtue, seize it and possess it for all eternity.¹ The Gloss also has something to interject here, stating plainly: 'It is a tremendous power to be born on earth and to seize back heaven and win by virtue that which because of our nature we should lose'.² The sixth cause is that we should appear in full armour so that the enemy is frightened when they see the weapons. Judith was heard to say when she had put to death the prince Holofernes: 'Each of you should take up and put on his weapons and when the sun rises, at a command you must all run out of the city in a great commotion, but do not come down. Just look as if you intended to run into their tents and rob them, so that Holofernes' men who are on guard duty become aware of you and on seeing the danger rush at once to tell their lord Holofernes. As they go to wake him they will find him covered in his own blood. In this way they will be so frightened that all manly courage will desert them and they will run away.'³ In the same way we carry weapons of virtue to show that we are in the service of the Lord, who is the king of kings for all eternity. At all times as the servants of God we should show great patience and equip ourselves according to God's wishes with the armour of righteousness, as God's virtue is called.⁴ The armour of God's virtue may well be called righteousness, for it teaches us to give everyone what is his and that we should leave the world and everything associated with it and go over to God, carrying His banner openly as He has taught us, with the symbol the angel told us about after Christ's birth, when he revealed it to the shepherds. He said: 'It is given as a sign to you that you will find a baby wrapped in rough blankets and laid in a crib'.⁵ Three virtues are expounded in these words. Firstly by childhood we should understand humility, which can smother arrogance. The wrappings signify poverty, which is effective against greed; the crib means a hard life which suppresses lustfulness. Hold this banner high in virtuous splendour and show it often to the wicked devil, because the sign will cause him such great fear and anxious dread that he will flee like a coward.

**This is about the first castle of the Teutonic Brethren, which was called
Vogelsang
Lines 3,393–512; II, 10**

Now that we have discussed the weapons which are necessary for battle, we will resume the story from where we left off. When, after due consideration, Duke

¹ Matthew 11, 12.

² Klaus Scholz and Dieter Wojtecki have identified this reference as Anselm of Laon, *Glossa ordinaria* on Matthew 11, 12. See Peter von Dusburg, *Chronik des Preussenlandes*, p. 90, footnote 30.

³ Judith 14, 2–5.

⁴ 2 Corinthians 6, 4.

⁵ Luke 2, 12.

Conrad had handed over the lands we discussed, Kulm, Löbau and Prussia, to the Order of the German House, as you have already heard, Brother Konrad von Landsberg, whom we have already mentioned, stayed on with his companions in Prussia. Their power was limited because they had no base in the country, so they had already decided from a distance, and confirmed this plan as they came closer, that if God willed it, they would keep the Vistula as a dividing line between them and the Prussians. They settled on this strategy and quickly requested that Duke Conrad build them a fortress where they could stay and from which they could launch attacks. That pure, noble man was only too ready to comply, because he loved God passionately. The words of a poem came to his mind: ‘Well begun is half done’, and he gathered his men and ordered them to build a castle on a small hill close to the Vistula near where Thorn¹ now stands on the other side of the river. They called the castle Vogelsang² and here the brothers began the long war, establishing themselves without hesitation with just a few ill-equipped armed men against the heathen horde (which was innumerable). In their many tribulations they did not sing the song of the nightingale but songs like the songs of grief the swan sings as it dies; because they had given up the blessed land where they had been born and brought up and gone far off into a strange land where they had to endure great hardships of all kinds all their days with no hope of ever seeing the land of their birth again. They had left well-established, fruitful, calm and peaceful lands and come to a land of horrors and wildernesses, which no-one tended.³ It was completely joyless and full of hard fighting, and to put it bluntly: for God’s sake they had abandoned freedom, honour, family and all the joys of the world, and given themselves up to a miserable existence. Their humble lives were beset with hunger, hardship, poverty and abasement. It is impossible to express fully in words the difficulties and misery they found themselves in. They might speak of it in the words of St Peter: ‘Look, Lord God, we have given up everything on earth and followed you: what shall be our reward?’⁴ O sweet Jesus, you who are the crown of all saints, with which crowns will you crown, and how will you decorate these pure, worthy men, who endure such hardship on earth so patiently in your name? They will fulfil God’s words in Isaiah: ‘The Lord God will comfort Zion and raise up its ruins. He will turn its wilderness into pleasure gardens and its deserts into a godly paradise. There will always be joy and wonder, thanksgiving for mercy and a sweet song of praise.’⁵

¹ Modern Toruń, Poland.

² Literally: Birdsong. The order’s strategy was to establish itself at this key point on the Vistula, which they could use as a basis for expanding north and east into the Kulmerland.

³ Deuteronomy 32, 10.

⁴ Matthew 19, 27.

⁵ Isaiah 51, 3.

This is about the arrival of more brothers of the German House and the building of the fortress called Nessau
Lines 3,513–610; II, 11

According to my sources, as soon as the house of Vogelsang was completed Brother Konrad sent messengers to the Grand Master Brother Hermann von Salza to inform him of what had been done, that he had completed what he had been asked to do, and he pleaded with him to send him more brothers and men. The Grand Master did this willingly. He sent him Brother Hermann Balk to be master, saying to him in the words God used to Joshua: ‘Be brave and mighty, because you are to lead the army of the children of Israel, your brothers, and bring them into the land God has promised them, and God will be with you in everything you do’.¹ Along with Brother Hermann Balk he sent a praiseworthy knight, Brother Dietrich von Bornheim, as marshal. Brother Konrad von Tautleben was also sent with them. He had previously been a highly regarded chamberlain to the sweet St Elizabeth. With them they had another two knight brothers, both called Heinrich. One was a Thuringian called Heinrich von Berge and the other came from Zeitz and was called Heinrich von Wittgendorf. These brothers were accompanied by a great many armed men and they were all sent to Prussia to help Brother Konrad as he had requested. When they were all together at Vogelsang they quickly decided it would be better to build a fortress down closer to the Vistula, which they called Nessau,² because the meadow surrounding the castle was flooded and wet. As soon as the brothers were living in the castle the Prussians launched an attack on Poland. When they saw the brothers coming after them, fully armed, they were amazed and wondered where they had come from and what they wanted. They were informed of what had happened by a Pole whom they had taken prisoner. He said: ‘the people you saw today are heroic warriors and elect knights. The pope sent them from Germany to this country to wage war against you constantly until they defeat you and bring you to accept baptism into the Christian faith and the authority of the Church of Rome.’ When they heard this, they laughed derisively and went back home.

This is about Brother Hermann Balk, the first master of the Brothers of the Teutonic House in Prussia
Lines 3,611–36; II, 12

Brother Hermann Balk of the German House was the first master in Prussia and was in command of the region for twelve years.³ He was also appointed the first

¹ Joshua 1, 6; Deuteronomy 31, 23.

² Literally: ‘Water meadow’, modern Nieszawa, Poland.

³ Hermann Balk was master of Prussia from 1230 to 1239 and master of Livonia from 1237 to 1239. He had secured the Kulmerland by 1233 and led crusaders against

master in Livonia and when he had had command of that region for about six years and had brought both areas well under control by fighting (because under his command wars always went well,¹ as will be seen later) he became so worn down by the battles and by old age that he could no longer fill this position, so he went back to Germany, where he later died and was buried. His many great, laudable achievements show how glorious this excellent warrior's exploits were in his day.

This is about the preaching of the cross and the absolution for pilgrims to Prussia and Livonia
Lines 3,637–70; II, 13

In the meantime Grand Master Hermann von Salza, a far-sighted man and clever strategist, went to the pope. Among other things that he asked for on behalf of his order, he requested that the pope should designate certain lands and regions for the preaching of a crusade for the benefit of Prussia.² This pope, and Innocent IV who succeeded him, awarded absolution to all pilgrims who went to Prussia and Livonia in God's name to put an end to the devil's contempt and to protect the faith, with all the benefits, eternal privileges and complete certainty that had always been given to the pilgrims who went on crusade to Jerusalem in the Holy Land.

the neighbouring Pomesanians in 1236. In 1233 Bishop Christian was taken prisoner by the Prussians. The order entrusted the conversion of the Prussians to the Dominicans and ignored the requests of the bishop for intervention. Balk oversaw the incorporation of the Brothers of Dobrin into the Teutonic Order in 1235, removing a further potential rival. Finally, the Livonian Sword Brothers, set up by the bishop of Riga in 1202, were integrated into the Teutonic Order in 1237 after the defeat at Schaulen (Šiauliai) in 1236 and Balk was sent there with 60 brothers to consolidate the situation.

¹ 1 Maccabees 2, 47.

² See the Bulls of Gregory IX of 13 and 17 September 1230 and 22 January 1232 (PUB 1, 1 No. 81, 87). For a study of the crusaders who came to Prussia see Werner Paravicini, *Die Preussenreisen des Europäischen Adels*, 2 vols (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1989–95).

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Book 3

**Here, the second part of this book ends and the third part begins. It describes the wars of the Brothers of the German House against the Prussians, firstly against the inhabitants of the Kulmerland
Lines 3,671–738**

Now that I have finished composing the second part of this book, albeit with great difficulty, as I predicted, about the arrival of the Teutonic Brothers in Prussia, I have decided that I should also tell the story of what happened to them in their wars with the heathens. Christ, guide me and graciously teach me, because without you I can do nothing. Help me too, sweet queen of heaven, because my poem is for you!

III, 1

Brother Hermann Balk, master of Prussia, set about the task of advancing the cause of the faith with great vigour. He took the duke of Poland with him, and all his forces, and together in God's name they crossed the Vistula to the Kulmerland and built a castle down on the shore, which he called Thorn. The castle was built in the year of our Lord 1231. This is how it was built: at that time a huge oak tree stood on a hill there; on its branches they built strong fortifications and battlements so that they could defend it. They also engineered the earth around the castle and constructed secure defences of stockades so that only a single path led to the castle. Only seven brothers were stationed there. They always had to keep boats at the ready, in case of attack by the Prussians. When they were not able to stay, they got into the boats and went to Nessau. Some time later, the brothers founded a town beside the castle of Thorn.¹ For practical reasons the castle and the town have since had to be moved to where they now stand, because the River Vistula often broke its banks and flooded the town. However, the castle remained on its original site for a long time.

¹ In the conquest of Prussia the order followed a pattern which was established at the outset. Areas were conquered and then secured by the building of castles which were garrisoned by members of the order once the pilgrims and other supporters had left. When an area had been secured a town was built which was populated by German migrants. Thorn was the first of these towns. It was founded in 1233.

The borders of the Prussian territory**Lines 3,739–70; III, 2**

Prussia lies within these borders: the Vistula, the salt sea, the Memel,¹ Rus',² the Duchy of Masovia and the Duchy of Dobrin. The Vistula is a fast-flowing river. It flows down from Cracow and enters the sea in Pomerelia, near the castle at Danzig.³ The course of the Vistula marks the boundary between Prussia and both Poland and Pomerania. The Memel is also a fast-flowing river. It flows from Rus' into the Baltic and like the Vistula enters the sea near a town with a castle: both castle and town are called Memel.⁴ The Memel forms the border between Prussia and Curonia,⁵ Lithuania and Rus'. The sea forms the third border and the fourth is formed by the territories of Rus', Masovia and Dobrin.

The different groups of Prussians and their strengths**Lines 3,771–854; III, 3**

The Prussia I have just defined can be divided into eleven areas, each of which has its own name, which is also used for the Prussians who live there. The first area is called Löbau and Kulmerland and was completely desolate before the brothers of the German House arrived and conquered Prussia. The second is called Pomesania and the third Pogesania, the fourth is Warmia and the fifth goes by the name of Natangia. The sixth is called Sambia, the seventh Nadrovia and the eighth Scalovia. They call the ninth Sudovia. It lies next to the tenth, which is called Galindia. The eleventh is Barthia and is where Plicka Barthia is located; they are now commonly referred to as Greater Barthia and Lesser Barthia.⁶ Among all these territories there

¹ Modern Neman, Niemen or Nemunas river, Lithuania.

² Rus' at this time was a collection of feuding principalities under the nominal control of the grand duke of Vladimir. It was a Christian state, but part of the Byzantine rather than the Roman church. The metropolitan bishop had his seat in Kiev. Between 1237 and 1240 the Tartars invaded from the east but Aleksandr Nevsky was able to maintain the local princes' authority by co-operating with the invaders. See Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, pp. 17–25.

³ Modern Gdańsk, Poland.

⁴ The town is the modern Klaipėda, Lithuania.

⁵ Curonia is the area between the Gulf of Riga and the mouth of the Neman river, and is now part of Latvia. It is also referred to by scholars as Courland, or using the German form Kurland. The modern Latvian form is Kurzeme. The people of Curonia were converted by the Sword Brothers during the early thirteenth century.

⁶ The names of some tribes are documented as far back as Ptolemy (10–78), who mentions the Sudovians and Galindians. The Sudovians are also known as the Jatwingians. The Pomesanians, from the westernmost region of Pomesania (now part of Poland: modern Pomezania), were the first to be conquered. The Pogesanians lived to the east of them in a region between the Elbląg and Pasłęka rivers, also modern Poland. The Warmians (Polish:

was none so small that it could not muster 2,000 horsemen and several thousand foot soldiers when they had to fight or go on campaigns. However, of all these lands, Sambia was richer and more populous than the others, and could muster 4,000 horsemen and more than 40,000 warriors. This was the situation at the time we are describing. The Sudovians were the most noble of all. In terms of wealth and power their status was higher than all the others. Their normal strength was 6,000 horsemen and countless foot soldiers. In addition, each of these peoples had many fortresses, but I do not intend to discuss these here, because it would be a pointless and tedious task.

See how great God's miracles are and how His wonderful miracles are so mighty that just seven Teutonic Brethren with only a few weapons between them, after fortifying an oak tree, as we have heard, were bold enough to pit themselves in battle against such a numerous enemy. And yet they were so successful in the course of so many miraculous battles that within 53 years all these heathens had been so thoroughly subjugated that you could not find a single one in all these lands who had not submitted to the yoke of faith. Sweet Jesus helped them; praise and thank Him in all eternity.

About the devastation of the Galindian territory Lines 3,855–982; III, 4

The numbers of the Galindians had increased and over the years there came to be so many of them that they filled the length and breadth of their land and it became too small for them. So they decided to do as Pharaoh had done before them. When he wanted to reduce the Israelite population and weaken it he told the midwives, 'Whenever a boy is born, you should kill it, and only let the girls live'. The Galindians, on the other hand, were told to kill all the girls who were born and keep only the boys to be warriors. But this ploy did not work. They did not do what they were supposed to, because when the women saw that the children were so delicate and beautiful they were unable to murder them. Instead they let the girls live and took them where they could be brought up in secret. When the men saw what the women had done, they were furious and together decided to cut off all the women's breasts, so that they could not feed the children. This inhuman act and

Warmia; German: Ermland), Barthians, and Galindians lived to the east of the Pogesanians in what are now the modern regions of Warmia and Galindia in Masuria, Poland, while the Natangians, Scalovians, Sambians (German: Samland; Lithuanian: Semba; Polish: Sambia) and Nadrovians inhabited the area roughly equivalent to what is now the Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia and southern Lithuania, and the Sudovians the border between modern Poland and Lithuania. Little trace remains of these peoples other than archaeological and linguistic reminders, as they were largely assimilated into the German and Polish populations. See Gimbutas, Marija, *The Balts*, Ancient peoples and places, 33 (London: Thames and Hudson, 1963), pp. 21–4.

their humiliation made the women very angry. They went to an old woman who was venerated as a seer and obeyed unquestioningly by the people of the country and asked her for advice on how they could avenge themselves for the shameful hurt inflicted on them by their men. The wise woman sympathised with her fellow women and took their complaint very seriously, so she sent for the greatest in their land and tricked them by saying: 'Your gods want you to lay down all your arms and armour, and everything which can cause injury, and set off defenceless on a campaign to wage war against the Christians'. As soon as they heard the woman's word they obeyed her at once. They gathered together everyone who was capable of fighting and wanted to take part in a campaign and set off enthusiastically to the nearest Christian lands, where they caused a lot of damage. In addition to the other damage they inflicted, they drove great numbers of men, women and livestock off into captivity. The Christians were desolate. When the invaders were on their way back to their own lands, some of the prisoners secretly escaped, went back to the Christians and swore to them on oath that the heathen army had had no weapons or any means of defence. They loyally advised the Christians to pursue the heathens fearlessly and ferociously and maintained that they would certainly defeat them. The Christian army was very encouraged by this news. They hurried off to attack the heathens and when they reached them they slaughtered the huge defenceless army in its entirety, and not one of the heathens escaped from the battle. When the Sudovians and other neighbouring peoples had been told what had happened to the Galindians they invaded that land and drove off the mothers with their children and all the servants who had stayed behind and kept them as slaves. That is why that region is deserted to this day.

Concerning the idols and false beliefs and customs of the Prussians
Lines 3,983–4,264; III, 5

The Prussians did not recognise God or any of His commandments. They were slow and simple, and therefore incapable of conceiving of Him, and because they were illiterate, they could not come to know Him through the written word, as we do. Indeed, the skills and wisdom of the written word were so alien to them that they were amazed that it was possible for someone to tell someone else in a foreign land their intention by means of sending a letter. And because God was unknown to them, this gave rise to the error of foolishly worshipping every creature as a god: thunder, sun, stars and moon, birds, animals and even toads were gods to them. Fields, rivers and forests were also sacred according to their beliefs, so they were not allowed to plough them or fish in them or cut down trees in the forests. In the centre of the lands of this foolish people, in the province of Nadrovia, was a distinguished city called Romovia, named after Rome, because it was the residence

of Criwe, the highest priest of the heathen religion.¹ The heathens revered him as the Christians do the pope, because as the pope rules all the Christians, so this man commanded the obedience of all the heathens: not only the Prussians, but also the Lithuanians and the heathen peoples of Livonia were subject to his command. He was so powerful and so highly respected that they not only honoured him and his family, but whenever a messenger was travelling through their territory and carried a staff or some other sign from Criwe, signifying that he was Criwe's emissary, he too was received with great honour. The kings, nobles and the common people were all in thrall to him. This priest also kept and protected the eternal flame, as was done in the Old Testament.

The Prussians also believed in the resurrection of the body, but not in the correct way. Their beliefs misled them into thinking that whatever a person's status was here and now, noble or commoner, rich or poor, weak or powerful, he would have the same status after the resurrection in the life to come. For that reason it was usual when a nobleman died, for his weapons and horse, man servants and maidservants, valuable items of clothing, hunting dogs and falcons and many of the other things connected with his status to be burned with the dead man. When a commoner died, according to their preposterous belief all the things connected with his trade were burned with him, so that all these things could be resurrected along with him, to be used as they had been in life. They also believed this devilish nonsense about their dead: when a member of the dead man's family went to Criwe and asked if he had seen anyone going past his house on such and such a day or during a particular night, Criwe would describe with great certainty the weapons and clothes, the retinue and the horses, and even the appearance of the dead man. And to convince them even more, he often showed them a sign that whoever had gone past had gouged or hacked on his door.

When they won a victory the heathens were in the habit of offering a third of the goods they had captured to their idols as thanksgiving for their safety. They gave it to Criwe, who burned it as a sacrifice to the gods. The Lithuanians, and other spawn of the devil who have no belief in God, usually only burn this offering in one specific place which is holy to their misguided way of thinking. When horses are to be sacrificed it is their custom to make them run and chase them for such a long time that they can barely stay on their feet; then they are ready to be sacrificed. The Prussians were also in the habit of casting lots before they did anything important to find out from their gods whether the matter would turn out in their favour or not. They were not interested in rich clothes or superfluous belongings. They put yesterday's clothes on again today and they do not care if the clothes are inside out. They are not used to soft beds or fine food. They traditionally had three kinds of drinks: water, mead and mare's milk, and they knew of no

¹ This description is thought to have been invented by Dusburg 'to make the Baltic religion appear like a counter-church' and make the idea of crusades there more meaningful to contemporaries: see S. C. Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending: a Pagan Empire within East-central Europe, 1295–1345* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 126–44.

others. They did not drink the milk until it had been consecrated according to their heathen rites. When they have guests, they do the best for them that they possibly can (that is their greatest virtue). Whatever food or drink they have in their house they share it freely and generously. They do not think they have been hospitable and looked after their guests well unless they have given them so much to drink that they begin to vomit. The normal practice is that they oblige the other to keep pace with their own immoderate drinking; they start by each guest bringing the host a measure and drinking his health on condition that the host drains the same measure. They go on drinking each other's health and the tankard goes back and forth, full and empty, for as long as it takes until men and women, host and guest, large and small are all drunk. By their way of thinking this is a very honourable way of passing the time – I think it does them no credit at all.

According to ancient tradition, it is still the custom for Prussians to buy their wives for money. The man keeps his wife as a servant. She is not allowed to eat at his table. Every day she has to wash the feet of the whole household and guests. No one begs because it is their custom that the poor can go unmolested from house to house and eat what they please. If a murder is committed among them there can be no conciliation until the dead man's family has killed the murderer or one of his closest friends in revenge. If a great unexpected misfortune ever befell them, they would kill themselves in their distress. They were unable to distinguish the individual days and they did not count in weeks. If they wanted to distinguish a specific day for the purpose of trade or making payments they counted the days and recorded them by making a knot in a strap or a piece of string or by carving a sign in a piece of wood for each day. In this way they were able to count the passage of days until they reached the agreed day when the business was to be settled. Some Prussians bathed daily in honour of their gods but others never went near a bath. Both the men and the women spun yarn, some of wool and some of linen, according to what they thought would please their gods. Some of them avoided black horses, others white ones and yet others different colours; they thought that they were extremely dangerous and never dared ride them.

How Dorge the heathen was converted

Lines 4,265–312; III, 6

There was a Prussian in Sambia, in the area of Schaaken,¹ called Dorge, who was so superstitious that he never rode white horses or kept them in his forests. The advocate² of Sambia, Brother Dietrich, wanted to cure him of this superstition and

¹ Modern Nekrasowo, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia.

² The Advocate (German: Vogt) in general usage was the official or bailiff entrusted with the defence and administration of the lands of bishoprics or churches. In the Teutonic Order he was an official who was subordinate to the local commander and was responsible for dealings with the local population.

bought him a white horse. The Prussian was miserable, but nonetheless he forced him to accept it and the horse spent the night in Dorge's stable. When morning came they found that the horse had been strangled along with all his livestock. They did this three times and each time the same thing happened. On the fourth occasion the advocate, that blameless man, bought a fourth white horse like the others and gave it to Dorge again: 'I will not stop giving you the horses until I cure you of your superstition'. The fourth horse was untouched by the devil. As a result Dorge was converted and bitterly repented his errors in the service of the devil. He became a good Christian and protector and defender of the faith. He devoted all his strength to the ardent and devout service of God and helped convert many of those who were newly baptised, strengthening their faith by word and deed.

This is how two of the Prussian fortresses were destroyed
Lines 4,313–400; III, 7

When the brothers were living in the oak tree, as I have described, there were reports that the Prussians had a castle called Rogow¹ above Thorn on the Vistula. They also had another one downstream which was situated where old Kulm is now. Between these two castles lived a noble Pomesanian called Pippin. He lived in a fortified tower near a lake which since then has been called Pippinsee after him. He had many heathens at his command with whom he waged wars and murdered; he killed or took prisoner any Christian who left the castle. The Christians suffered great distress as a result because they were constantly plagued by the fortresses above and below them and Pippin in the middle. This went on until one occasion when the brothers were fighting the heathens from Rogow, and when by the will of God they had killed many of them and were taking away their leader as a prisoner, this man agreed to hand over the castle of Rogow to the brothers if they spared him. This turned out well for the brothers because after some time the same Prussian voluntarily took the brothers and their men to where the second castle's garrison was sitting drinking. When they were all drunk and lying around like pigs the brothers fell upon them: they killed or captured all the heathens defending the castle and burned the castle down, reducing it to ashes, and then they thanked their guide. Not long after this he cleverly tricked his brother-in-law, the Pippin we have mentioned before, and delivered him into the brothers' hands, to their great satisfaction. They tied him to the tail of a horse and dragged him off to Thorn, where he was hanged from a tree.² According to what I have read, this Pippin was the father of that noble man Matte, from Pomesania, and although his father had fought to stamp out Christianity and was its enemy, the son was active in his

¹ Modern Rogów, Poland.

² The defeat of Pippin consolidated the order's control of the Kulmerland, which was the base for campaigns against the Pomesanians and Pogesanians from 1230 to 1237.

support for it. He was ready to fight for the faith and the children of Christianity, and nothing could stop him until he died.

**This is about pilgrims and the construction of the castle and city of Kulm
Lines 4,401–60; III, 8**

As the pope had instructed, the crusade was now being preached all over Germany and when this new form of battle chosen by God in Prussia was propounded in sermons and the indulgence and the privileges available to the warriors were announced, God moved the heart of many a noble hero across Germany to abandon all thoughts of rest and take the cross in the name of God.¹ They buckled on their armour and confirmed that they wanted to take revenge on the heathens for the injustice evilly and ferociously inflicted on the followers of the crucified Lord. They put to one side anything which might hinder or delay their propitious journey and set off enthusiastically. They kept in mind an exhortation from St Jerome: ‘Even if your father is blocking the door and your brother is so upset that he is hanging round your neck and your mother lays bare the breasts that nourished you and they all oppose you, do not be deterred but step past your father and your mother and rush to the banner of the cross’.² Thus many pilgrims abandoned their friends and came to Prussia under the sign of the cross. When a number of them had arrived in Thorn the praiseworthy master Hermann Balk gathered them together and in the year of our Lord 1332 immediately built the fortress and the city of Kulm where the old city still stands.³

¹ Pope Gregory IX had issued bulls in 1230 and 1232 at the request of Hermann of Salza and these were proclaimed in churches in Bremen and Magdeburg, Pomerania, Moravia, Bohemia, Holstein and Gotland to initiate the appeal for reinforcements to support the Prussian crusade; see Klaus Militzer, *Die Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005), p. 65.

² The source of the quotation is unidentified.

³ As the territorial overlord of Prussia, the order had rights and responsibilities which, alongside the military protection of the people, encompassed trade, justice and the administration of the towns. The order also introduced standard weights and measures. A system of law known as the *Kulmer Handfeste* (Kulm Law), established by Hermann von Salza in 1233, became the basis for the rights of most of the towns founded by the order in Prussia. It established Kulm and Thorn as towns which had the right to mint currency. The original document was lost in 1244 when the city was attacked by Swantopelk during the first Prussian insurrection but a new version, slightly altered in the order’s favour, was produced in 1251. See Udo Arnold, *Staat und Orden* (Marburg, 1993).

About the brothers' battles against the Pomesanians and the construction of the castle of St Marienwerder
Lines 4,461–518; III, 9

When, with the help of God, these castles had been built in Kulmerland and the heathens' filth had been cleared right away with a stiff brush, the master, his brothers and the pilgrims set about God's work by attacking the neighbouring heathens' land. In their clever advance preparations they assembled everything that was required for a fortress, and took it in ships out to the river island called Queden.¹ The brothers did this secretly without drawing attention to themselves. They built a castle there on a hill close to the town where Marienwerder now stands. They called the castle Marienwerder and finished it 1233 years after the birth of our Lord. After this a laudable, bold and wise knight, the burgrave of Magdeburg known as 'Small Hand', came on a pilgrimage from Saxony.² He brought many knights and fighting men with him and stayed at Kulm for a full year. During this year he and his men accompanied the brothers down to Marienwerder and moved the fortress away from its island at Queden and established it there in its present position in a region of Pomesania called Reisen. During the rebuilding the castle changed its location but not its name.

About the building of the town of Marienwerder
Lines 4,519–68; III, 10

While the burgrave of Magdeburg was still in Kulm, having not yet fulfilled his oath, many great princes arrived in Prussia from Poland. By name they were: Duke Conrad of Masovia, the duke of Cracow, the duke of Kujavia,³ and Duke Heinrich of Breslau, a very praiseworthy lord who was later brutally murdered by the Tartars.⁴ Władysław Odonicz, duke of Gniezno was also there and many other noble men who lived between the Oder and the Vistula, and from the Bober as far as the River Netze. All the great men who lived in this area at that time came with all their men. Another who arrived was Lord Swantopelk, duke of Pomerelia, and his brother Lord Sambor.⁵ All these lords brought so many knights and such great

¹ Queden and Marienwerder, both modern Kwidzyn, Poland.

² Burchard IV von Querfurt.

³ Casimir, son of Conrad of Masovia.

⁴ These individuals have been confused by Jeroschin. This probably refers to Heinrich I (1165–1238), who was also duke of Cracow, and whose son Heinrich II was killed by the Mongols in 1241.

⁵ Duke Swantopelk of Pomerelia (1212–66) was originally a supporter of the order, but later allied himself with the Prussians when he realised that the order's settlements were threatening his own trade. See Christiansen, *Northern Crusades*, p. 106; Mary Fischer, 'Des tuuils kint? The German Order's Perception of its Enemies', *Archiv für das Studium der*

forces with them to Prussia according to what I have discovered that it was the biggest Christian army ever seen there. They went to St Marienwerder and built the city and refortified the castle which had recently been founded there.

**About a Christian victory which resulted in the death of 5,000 Prussians
Lines 4,569–632; III, 11**

When the building work was finished, winter was setting in, and the ice was frozen hard the Master, Brother Hermann, assembled his brothers and the aforementioned pilgrims, all of whom were passionate in their desire to dampen the Prussians' audacity, and they set off on a successful campaign with them to the region of Reisen. They killed or captured many of the heathens and stormed through the area as far as the River Sorge,¹ where luck was on their side and they enjoyed the battle they had been hoping for. They found assembled there a large, well-armed, powerful Prussian army which was riding to attack the Christians. When the Prussians saw the Christians approaching so valiantly their vanguard found themselves bringing up the rear as they fled like cowards. It was easy to see what they were thinking. Lord Swantopelk and his brother Sambor and their men, who were more experienced in dealing with the Prussians' tactics than the others, arranged to set up road-blocks on the paths through the undergrowth so that none of them could escape. They stabbed and slashed in their terrible anger; the knightly sword of Christianity greedily devoured the sinners' flesh, their spears were red, because the Prussians had no way to escape; they fell like the cowards they were.² The Christians carried on the battle until more than 5,000 Prussians lay dead in the snow. When they had been defeated the shout of joy from the pilgrims for their success was heard far and wide. They gave thanks and praise to Christ their saviour and returned home.

**Of the construction of the fortress of Rehden and a miraculous story of a brother there
Lines 4,633–744; III, 12**

In the year of our Lord 1234, when the Prussians had been driven out of the Kulmerland Brother Hermann, the master, sent all the men he had to build a strong, secure fortress called Rehden³ at the edge of the wilderness between Pomesania and the Kulmerland at a site on the routes the Prussians used to launch both open

neueren Sprachen und Literaturen, 244/2 (2007), pp. 260–75. Pomerelia was the eastern part of Pomerania and was an independent duchy from 1227 until 1294.

¹ Modern Dzierzgoń, Poland, also known as Sirgune.

² This battle against the Pogesanians took place in the winter of 1233–34.

³ Modern Radzyń Chełmiński, Poland.

and covert attacks on the region. I have read that a brother in this fortress was wrongly convinced by the devil's trickery that the Order of the Teutonic House, of which he was a member, could not nourish his soul. This persuaded him that he must join another stricter, more demanding order immediately. After he had made this decision he went to sleep and dreamed that he saw St Bernard, St Dominic, St Francis and St Augustine, each with the members of their orders, processing with hosts of angels, and he begged and fervently pleaded with them to be allowed to join their brotherhood. Each of them refused him. When he was standing there downcast he saw the pure Virgin, Mary the mother of God, coming towards him with a wonderful array of the brothers of the German House. He fell weeping at the Virgin's feet, humbly begging her to have pity on him and allow him to stay with his brothers. She replied: 'No, it is not right for you, because you, you stupid ape, think your order is lax, and carries no burden, and that as a member it is not possible to suffer as you would wish.' With that she brought forward the brothers standing around her, pulled aside their cloaks to show him the many wounds and blows from which they had died in the defence of the faith against the attacks of the heathens and said: 'Look! Now can you say that your brothers have not suffered in the name of the sweet lord Jesus Christ?' After these words the visions vanished and the brother woke up and set off without delay to the chapter house where the brothers were assembled, knelt down in front of them all, humbly retracted his earlier wicked, misguided accusations against them and related them the vision as he had seen it. From this time on this brother fervently redoubled his devotion to the service of God and a few days later was killed by the heathens.¹

Of the arrival of the margrave of Meissen Lines 4,745–66; III, 13

At the same time as Rehden was being built, that illustrious prince, true and devoted servant of God, Heinrich margrave of Meissen arrived in Prussia, bringing 500 noblemen skilled in the use of weapons and keen for battle, and all the equipment they needed for this purpose.² This good, noble lord applied all his energy, might and courage to the task of wiping out the wicked heathens and extending the lands controlled by the Christians.

¹ In 1312, not long before Dusburg began writing the history, the Knights Templar had been disbanded by Pope Clement V. The insertion of this and other similar anecdotes probably reflects the leadership's desire to emphasise the order's legitimacy in the eyes of potential crusaders and maintain morale within the order.

² Heinrich III, margrave of Meissen (1215–88) was the son of Dietrich of Meissen and Jutta of Thuringia. He campaigned in Prussia during 1236. This campaign is likely to have been his first experience of armed combat.

How the Christians destroyed many fortresses and subdued the Pomesanians

Lines 4,767–826; III, 14

According to what I have read, there was a region in Pomesania called Reisen where bold, renowned warriors lived; this prince attacked them boldly and relentlessly. He plundered, burned and spilled much blood in his many ferocious campaigns against them. The Prussians controlled a fortress on the River Mocker. He captured it and broke down all the fortifications they had built where Riesenburg¹ now stands and at nearby Riesenkirch, at Pestlin, Stuhm, Willenberg and Drausensee.² There were fortresses in all these places which he captured from the control of the Prussians, killing or taking prisoner all those he found there and then burning the fortresses to ashes. The margrave campaigned in this way across the region, powerful, bold and like a lion, terrifying everyone and launching so many attacks on the unbaptised heathens that it is impossible for me to recount all of them. He crushed them to such an extent by his battles and attacks that they could not escape him and had to submit to the yoke of faith, which they still carry to this day. So that worthy man of God brought Pomesania under the brothers' control. May God give him joy in heaven as a reward! The freedoms which were awarded to the Pomesanians at this time were used as a model for ruling the other lands they later settled.

Of two warships and the departure of the margrave

Lines 4,827–78; III, 15

The wise man always acts wisely to avert any dangers he might encounter in the future; the aforementioned margrave was far-sighted and always acted wisely. He had two warships built, one called 'Pilgrim' and the other 'Friedland'.³ The ships' names reflected their purposes, because they brought peace to the Christians then living in Prussia. These two ships were used to build two laudable castles at Elbing and Balga, which secured the stretch of water known as the Vistula Lagoon, so the Prussians did not dare use it to attack the Christians.⁴ These two ships were sunk many years later. After completing his many good deeds in Prussia, waging wars

¹ Modern Prabuty, Poland

² Pestlin is modern Postolin, Stuhm is modern Sztum, Willenberg is now Wielbark and Drausensee is Lake Drużno, all Poland.

³ Literally: 'peaceful land'.

⁴ The Vistula Lagoon (German: Frisches Haff; Polish: Zalew Wiślany; Russian: Kaliningradskiy Zaliv) is a fresh-water lagoon in the Baltic between the towns of Elbląg (Poland) and Kaliningrad (Russia) and separated from Gdańsk Bay by a thin stretch of land known as the Vistula Spit. Control of the waterways was essential for control of Prussia because of the difficulty of transporting goods and supplies across the difficult terrain.

of attrition with all his might against the ferocious heathens as I have described, and having fulfilled the terms of his pilgrimage, this noble man of God returned home. He left his knights in Prussia to help the brothers build the castle at Elbing, which they later duly accomplished.

Of the wars against the Pogesanians and the construction of the castle at Elbing
Lines 4,879–920; III, 16

When by the grace of God the Pomesanians were no longer a threat, having converted and become subject to the brothers, the brothers sent out their forces to fight against the Pogesanians. The wars began like this: the master, his brothers, and the pilgrims the illustrious margrave of Meissen had left in Prussia had all the equipment necessary for building transported in the two ships to Pogesania to a meadow surrounded by the River Elbing. The meadow was situated where the Elbing flows into the Vistula Lagoon. Here the Christian army lost no time in building a castle which was named Elbing, like the river. It was constructed in the year of our Lord 1237. According to what I have heard this castle was destroyed by the heathens; the Christians later rebuilt it and a city at the location where they can still be seen today.

Of a miraculous sign
Lines 4,921–94; III, 18

Since then the brothers of Elbing have waged so many laudable wars against the Pogesanians that they cannot all be listed here, but I will tell you one very wonderful story I have heard about the brothers at Elbing. It happened at a time when they were engaged in furious wars against the heathens and pursuing with a very few men a large army which had devastated, burned and looted in their region, carrying off a great deal of plunder. When they were about to engage the enemy, all the heathen force fled like cowards and escaped and the brothers could only capture one of them, whom they took away with them. Seeing how small the brothers' army was, he asked where the rest were. When he was told there were no more than he saw, he said: 'Let me tell you this: today we saw the battlefield full of men prepared for battle, all carrying weapons and wearing the brothers' habits. The sight of such a large number terrified us so much that we fled.' The same was said by all the Pogesanians who had been there when they converted to the Christian faith soon afterwards, because although the Pogesanians fought long and hard against the brothers, this wonderful miracle convinced some of them. They also calculated that they could no longer endure the attacks the brothers tirelessly launched against them, so they bowed their stubborn, wild necks without further

resistance to the faith and the brothers' control. To this end hostages were sent to the brothers as lasting guarantees.

Of the brothers' wars against the Warmians, Barthians and Natangians and the killing of many brothers and Christians

Lines 4,995–5,062; III, 18

I think no-one can fully appreciate or describe the hardship, misery and danger the master and his brothers routinely accepted in order to spread the Christian faith and extend Christian lands. At the time when, with the help of God, without whom nothing good happens, the heathen people, that is to say the Pomesanians and Pogesanians, had accepted the faith and submitted to the brothers' power, these same bold brothers turned their attacks towards the Warmians, Natangians and Barthians who had been harassing them. This is how it began: the master sent out brothers and armed men in the ships, with the intention that they should sail down the Vistula Lagoon to look for a good site to build a fortress against these heathens. When they came to the region known as Warmia they disembarked and saw a Prussian castle in the area near to where Balga¹ now stands. They did not dare attack it because there were too few of them, but they did not want to leave empty handed so they ransacked the outlying villages, robbing and burning. When the heathen population saw how few of them there were, they attacked them and killed all the brothers and their men, and none escaped except those who had been sent back to guard the ships. When they saw their comrades being killed and were unable to help them they were greatly distressed. They fled immediately in the ships and went back to find the master, whom they told everything that had happened.

About the castle at Balga

Lines 5,063–136; III, 19

When the good master heard this terrible news from the messengers he was more pained and distressed than anyone would believe. He turned for comfort to the words David used to comfort Joab, the leader of his knights, when he was suffering greatly at the death of his men. He reprimanded him in this way, when he saw that he was too distressed: 'Do not allow this to affect you, because the fate of battle is uncertain; sometimes the sword fells some and sometimes others. You should encourage those who are sad and tell your fighters to destroy the enemies of the

¹ Near the modern village of Veseloe (German: Weselnoje), Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia. As described below, the order captured and destroyed a Warmian fortress called Honeida and built their own fortress on the site, which was strategically important for the control of shipping on the Vistula Lagoon.

kingdom.¹ This consoled the master and feeling slightly better, he sent a large, well-equipped army by ship to avenge their suffering and the crimes perpetrated against the murdered Christians. They disembarked when they arrived at the beach at Balga and went to the castle, where they set up all their bowmen in good positions in front of the castle. They began the assault boldly by setting up ladders against the battlements. In the meantime the leader of the besieged garrison, called Codrunus, had secretly gone over to the brothers. With his help they quickly took the castle by force. What slaughter followed this. They avenged pain with pain and avenged the blood the good Christians had shed earlier near the castle by inflicting great suffering on the Prussians in their onslaught. The Christians stabbed, hacked, killed and rained blows for as long as there were Prussians to be found. However, they did take some of them prisoner. When the activity was over, the brothers thanked God that it had gone so well. They occupied the castle and since then have fought many praiseworthy battles against these accursed people. Balga was occupied in the year of our Lord 1239.

This is how Balga was besieged by the Prussians
Lines 5,137–62; III, 20

When the Prussians in the area heard this news, Pyopso, a leader of the Warmians, sent his entire fighting force and besieged Balga castle. Because he was also the leader of the others he wanted to be the first and look like a hero by storming the castle. To this end he set off and quickly approached the castle. A brother took aim at him with an arrow and shot him, making him abandon his attack and fall dead to the ground. This terrible sight gave the others such a shock that they too withdrew and abandoned the assault.

About the construction of a mill and how it was destroyed
Lines 5,163–202; III, 21

At the same time many of the noble and powerful men from Warmia gave up their unbelief and their patrimony completely and went over to the brothers as their allies, with their wives and children and all their men, because they realised that God was with them, looking after them and fighting for them. The brothers were overjoyed that they had come, because their arrival substantially strengthened their army. They quickly and carefully built a mill on the far side of a bridge where the bridge turns into a road.² They fortified it against attacks from the many heathens in the vicinity. They left two brothers there with enough armed men to defend it

¹ 2 Samuel 11, 25.

² As part of the economic development of Prussia, the order built a network of mills and engineered the necessary water supply for them. See Marjan Tumler, *Der Deutsche*

against the enemy, but it did not last long. A short time later this mill was attacked and captured by the Prussians and burned to the ground. The brothers and their men who had been left there were all brutally put to death.

**This is about the spiritual life of the brothers at Balga and in other houses
Lines 5,203–36; III, 22**

What lives of purity, virtue, austerity and monastic discipline the brothers at Balga and other houses across the land led can only be known to Him to whom all hearts are open and from whom no secrets can be kept. Their chapels were seldom without brothers praying; there was no corner of these houses where there was not a brother hiding after compline and matins and secretly scourging himself with rods or praying on his knees. Monks from other orders came to Engelsburg¹ and when they experienced the brothers' way of life and their circumstances they began to ask the name of the house. When they heard it was called Engelsburg, they said; 'The name and the place are one, because the brothers here strive to live an angelic life.'

**About the building of the castle of Partegal and the tower at Scrando
Lines 5,237–58; III, 23**

There were Prussians in Warmia called the Gobotini who were very powerful at that time and posed a great danger to the brothers; they assembled an army of countless warriors and on the plain at Partegal they built a fortress called Partegal after the field, and another tower on the hill at Scrando. They garrisoned the two fortresses with many powerful armed men who harassed the brothers at Balga on a daily basis, so that none of them dared to appear outside the castle.

**About the building of the castle of Schneckenburg
Lines 5,259–82; III, 24**

The plain on which the house of Balga is situated is surrounded by marshland which is impassable by horse or on foot during the summer other than by a path across a bridge which is still there today. For their future safety, and to ward off any threat, the brothers built a castle on a hill in front of this bridge, which I heard they called Schneckenburg, and there they deployed a number of brothers and also a brave, noble man who was skilled in warfare (I have heard that his name was

Orden von seinem Ursprung bis zum Gegenwart (Bonn-Bad Godesberg: Wissenschaftliches Archiv, 1974) pp. 34–7.

¹ Literally 'Angel's Castle' in the modern village of Pokrzywno, Poland.

Hartwig, the father of Hartwig of Pokarwin), and more fighters whose duty it was to guard it and prevent the Prussians from attacking them.

About the arrival of Duke Otto von Braunschweig, the slaughter of the Prussians and the destruction of the castle of Partegal and the tower at Scrando

Lines 5,283–522; III, 25–6

There were many men in these fortresses built by the Prussians (that is Scrando and Partegal) and they constantly skirmished with the brothers and prevented them from setting out to attack the enemy as they should. The brothers were concerned by this and often met to try to work out a good way of attacking the Prussians; since they were unable to come up with any plans they came to the conclusion that it was not worth their being there because they were so heavily surrounded by the enemy, who were able to inflict damage on them and they could not respond. They were also under pressure from another consideration which was causing problems at the same time: they were short of food supplies. So they planned to burn down Balga and retreat from it. But they were uncomfortable about withdrawing from such a strong castle. They could often be heard praying to God tearfully that in His constancy He would send help and release them from their suffering. While this was going on and they were at their wits' end and very anxious, they saw a ship out at sea, heading towards them, in which they fervently hoped Christian people were coming to help them. Nonetheless they were very afraid until the ship arrived. When they discovered who had arrived and how his coming had come about, Lord God, how amazed and how utterly happy the brothers and the Christians were then! For just like the sight of a fresh, cold spring to someone tormented by thirst, and in the guise of a messenger bringing good news from far-off lands,¹ Duke Otto von Braunschweig, also known as of Lüneburg, arrived in God's name as a pilgrim in Prussia: this scion of noble blood was an illustrious prince who always loved God, and in his ardent devotion never left the path of virtue.² This wise, great lord also brought with him his court with all the accoutrements it had in his home. He brought hunting dogs and hawks and a great deal of equipment, more than had ever been seen before in Prussia, and also his hunters, and, to cut a long story short, the gracious prince brought everything appropriate to his rank as well as a huge army. The country and the brothers were greatly pleased about his arrival, because he came to help them and rescued them from difficulties. This is what happened: the duke went up to Balga so clandestinely that the heathen people settled in the

¹ Proverbs 25, 25.

² The references to Duke Otto von Braunschweig are considerably expanded by Jeroschin, probably out of respect for his first patron, Grand Master Luder von Braunschweig, the duke's grandson. Dusburg's text does not mention the hunting equipment or the bribe to Pomanda, who in the Latin is inspired by 'the spirit of Christ' (Dusburg III, 26).

neighbourhood did not know that he was there or that he had arrived. The lord was a wise and clever man, so he went about quietly to gain intelligence about the brothers' situation and the state of the war; and when he was fully informed, he used generous gifts to persuade Pomanda, a high-born Prussian nobleman who had previously been accorded great respect among the Prussians but had recently converted to the Christian faith and come over to the brothers, to fight for the cause of the faith which the Prussians were trying to wipe out. This Pomanda left Balga and went to his fellow countrymen, the Prussians, explaining the reason for his departure in this way: he said he had come to attack the Christians and could inflict great damage and misery on them because he knew their habits. When the Prussians heard this from Pomanda they were exceedingly happy because they truly hoped that with his advice they would quickly destroy the brothers. So Pomanda advised them that the most skilful warriors among the Warmians, Natangians and Barthians should assemble in an army along with everyone else who was able and willing to carry arms and was at all capable of fighting and that they should march to Balga, confident that they would be successful, and take up their position in front of the castle. The brothers up in the castle were well aware of the plan, which had earlier been discussed secretly with Pomanda. So they also got ready with the illustrious prince of Braunschweig, who was keen and thirsting after heathen blood, and all of the army which had accompanied him. Then they left the castle and went out to the Prussians in the name of our Lord to the sound of fanfares and fought a very praiseworthy battle with the unbaptised. So completely did they drown them in their own blood that they brought everlasting honour to the good Lord. No-one escaped to go home with the news of what had happened. When the battle was over and the heathens had been put to shame by the Christians they did not waste any time. Duke Otto von Braunschweig, who had refreshed and consoled the brothers during such an arid period, like a branch bearing sweet fruits, and had brought about the downfall of the Prussians, marched with the brothers' army on the castle at Partegal and captured and burned down both the castle and the tower known as Scrando; none of the Prussians there survived; all of them were dispatched forthwith in mortal terror to join their comrades-in-arms in hell. The aforesaid illustrious prince stayed at Balga for a whole year with all the might of the army he had brought with him, and fought so many battles against the heathens during this time that they are impossible to count, so I will not speak about them. Why do I need to say more? He caused them such misery and harried them, night and day, so ferociously that he reduced them to the point where they had to submit themselves to God and the brothers and receive Christianity, as will be described to you later. When the year was up, the laudable prince left the brothers with a wealth of equipment, took leave of them with great joy and sailed home. He left them all the weapons and horses he had there and all his supplies of food. That was enough to keep the fortress of Balga for a whole year after his departure. He also left them all his hunting dogs and the nets he had brought to the country, as I mentioned before, and two of his excellent huntsmen, both of whom later became brothers in the Teutonic Order. They were able to feed all

the lower Prussian houses for many years with this hunting equipment, because great quantities of game were killed and the dogs were used for breeding. From the days of Otto until the present hunting has been carried on all over Prussia. That the Teutonic Brethren alone should take part in such hunting should not surprise anyone, because they are allowed to hunt, although it is forbidden to other orders.¹

This is how the Warmians, Natangians and Barthians settled among the brothers and about the building of more castles

Lines 5,523–98; III, 27

The peoples from the area of Warmia, Barthia and Natangia had deviated so far from God's rule that He enforced His will through the agency of the aforementioned lord of Braunschweig and the might of the brothers and weakened them so much that they were unable to withstand the brothers any longer; and when they saw that they were so helpless in the face of acts of virtue, and thoroughly defeated, they sent hostages to express their desire forthwith truly to be subject to Christ, the true God and to the rule of the brothers. The brothers were uncertain about this and did not dare fully trust them. Therefore after discussing how keen they were to prevent a situation where the Prussians could easily foment revolts if they rebelled, they immediately built a castle named Kreuzburg in Natangia on a river called the Keyster.² In Barthia too they were very conscientious. They built three castles there, Wiesenburg, Rössel and also Bartenstein.³ I have heard that some people say that they built two fortresses in Warmia, Braunsberg and Heilsberg⁴ some time later, and a town in Galindia. A sufficient number of brothers and other people were stationed in these fortresses to protect them from attacks. Additionally, many other strongholds were built by noble guests, knights and their men who came from Germany during these years with their households, wives and children and all their goods and chattels, and all of whom eagerly and fervently desired to come to the aid of Prussia. God knows all their names. From this time on the Christians

¹ See *Statuten*, ed. Perlbach, p. 47, Regel 23, *Diz ist von der iaget*. The brothers themselves were not allowed to hunt but those who were stationed in heavily wooded areas were permitted employ hunters to hunt for game and furs and to accompany these hunters in order to protect them. They were also permitted to kill bears, wolves and similar predators, but only where these threatened communities and not as sport. They themselves were not allowed to use dogs. See Klaus Militzer, 'Jagd und Deutscher Orden', in Werner Rösener (ed.), *Jagd und Höfische Kultur im Mittelalter*, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 135 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1997), pp. 325–63.

² Kreuzburg is now Slavskoye, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia. The Keyster is a tributary of the Pasma.

³ Rössel is the modern Reszel and Bartenstein is Bartoszyce, both in Poland.

⁴ Modern Braniewo and Lidzbark Warmiński, Poland.

began to spread across Prussia and religious observance increased to the honour and praise of Christ our great Lord. May he be eternally and unceasingly blessed there.

**This is how Livonia came to the brothers of the German House
Lines 5,599–684; III, 28**

After six years had passed, during which Brother Volkwin, who was the second master of the Order of the Sword Brothers, sent messengers to Brother Hermann, known as von Salza, who was grand master of the Teutonic Order at that time, requesting him to arrange with the highest power in the church, that is to say the pope, that this order be united with and subsumed within his order. The change was that the Sword Brothers were to leave their order and be received into the Teutonic Order. While Brother Hermann and their Brother Johann von Magdeburg (who, as I read, was one of the messengers sent by Brother Volkwin) were presenting their case to the pope, a brother called Gerlach the Red came on horseback from Livonia, with the news that Master Volkwin, 40 of his brothers, many pilgrims and a large number of Christians had died in battle a few days earlier, slaughtered by the heathens.¹ When this became known to the pope he immediately concluded the matter mentioned above and he released brothers John and Gerlach, those men who had formerly been Sword Brothers, from their order, clothed them in the habit of the Teutonic Order in white mantels with black crosses on them and arranged there and then that as forgiveness for all their sins, all the brothers who had been in Livonia all these years as members of the Sword Brothers should join the Teutonic Order and live honourably in it. When this had been concluded, Brother Hermann, the grand master, sent Brother Hermann Balk, that wise, devout man who had been master in Prussia to Livonia. I read he also sent with him 40 hand-picked brothers and many bold warriors. And when Balk had been master in the land for six years, as I mentioned earlier, and was no longer capable of doing the work, he returned to Germany where he died and is now at rest after so much work and effort.

¹ The Livonian order had made several requests throughout the 1230s to be admitted to the larger Teutonic Order. The Livonian Sword Brothers had attracted criticism on several counts – see Christiansen, *Northern Crusades*, pp. 101–2. The Teutonic Order refused their requests until Pope Gregory IX compelled them to integrate the other order into their ranks after the Sword Brothers were defeated by the Lithuanians at the battle of Schaulen in 1236. As part of the ensuing Treaty of Stensby, the order agreed to the partition of Livonia: it gave up Harria (Estonian: Harjumaa) and Vironia (Estonian: Virumaa), along with the city of Reval (modern Tallinn) to the king of Denmark and retained the area around Jervia (Estonian: Järva).

This is about Brother Poppo, the second master in Prussia
Lines 5,685–96; III, 29

Brother Poppo von Osterna was the second master in Prussia; when he had held office in a praiseworthy manner for seven years he laid down that burden and went to Germany where not long afterwards he accepted the even greater burden of election as the grand master of the order.¹

This is about the great hardships suffered by the brothers and other people in Prussia
Lines 5,697–732; III, 30

No-one can adequately describe the misery and hardship the brothers and other Christians suffered in the early days in Prussia: they were short of clothing, food and drink and everything needed to sustain life. If during these years anyone wanted to cultivate fields and grow crops, they had to do it at night because of the harassment of their enemies, and the crops which they sowed at great danger to themselves and at such great effort were harvested by others, so that they had little benefit from their hard work. See how hard and difficult life was for them, but God's grace was so great in them and so filled their hearts that they were happy and joyful to suffer these things in the name of the dear Christ Jesus, in whose name they gladly and unhesitatingly drank the bitter cup of martyrdom.

This is a digression
Lines 5,733–864; IV, 21–9

Here we going to give the story a rest and weave in some of the events which, so true accounts tell us, were happening in other countries. In the year of our Lord 1231, on 19 November, we are truly informed that the gracious St Elizabeth left this poor life and attained the kingdom of heaven. In the course of the same year Hungary and Poland were attacked by the Tartars. At the same time, Ferdinand, king of Castile, won a victory over the Saracen king of Granada. He surrounded him with such a mighty force that for a long time afterwards the king had to pay him a daily tribute of 1,000 gold maravedís. In the year of our Lord 1232 a Jew in Toledo, in Spain, found a wonderful book inside a stone which on the outside seemed intact but was hollow inside. The book was written in three different scripts: Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Its pages were like wood and were covered in writing like a Psalter and it spoke of three different worlds, describing the nature of man from the time of Adam right up to the Antichrist. Concerning the third age

¹ Poppo von Osterna (modern Osternohe) was Prussian master in 1241 and from 1244 to 1247. He was grand master from 1252 to 1256.

it states: 'God's son, the lord of heaven will be born as a man by the Virgin Mary. This child, the saviour of the world, will suffer a martyr's death and save mankind from all evil and destroy the power of the wicked devil.' When the Jew read this he was saved from the error of his ways and was baptised as a Christian along with his entire household. It was also stated in the book that it would be found during King Ferdinand's reign. In the year of our Lord 1235 the gracious Elizabeth was elevated to the holy ranks of sainthood by Pope Gregory IX so that she would be revered the whole world over. This is how it happened: in the Dominican convent at Perugia the pope consecrated an altar to the pure sweet mother. In the year of our Lord 1239 King Louis of France brought our Lord's holy crown of thorns from Constantinople and put it in a place of great honour in Paris, to the great glory of that city. In the course of the same year strong contingents of Tartars invaded Hungary and Poland, where the vanguard of their army killed Coloman, the brother of the king of Hungary, in battle. Duke Henry of Poland also died on the battlefield. The Tartars slaughtered them and everyone they came across brutally and indiscriminately, young and old, men and women. The accursed heathens so despoiled the land that many of the people who lived there took refuge in the mountains and forests and had to eat the dust of the mountain instead of flour. On the third of June of the same year, in the middle of the day, there was such a total eclipse of the sun that the bright stars were clearly visible, just as at dusk. In the year of our Lord 1240 Celestine IV was pope in Rome and Frederick II was emperor. Now let us leave this digression and take up the chronicle of the country again where we left off.

About the first Prussian revolts and Lord Swantopelk's wars against the brothers of the German House in the year of our Lord 1241 but firstly about the devil's resentment about the prospering of the faith
Lines 5,865–952; III, 31

It would be too challenging, too wide-ranging, and take too long for my feeble powers to tell the whole detailed story of how greatly, how mightily, how magnificently and how chivalrously, just like the armies of the Maccabees, the master and his brethren we named earlier turned their hands to the task of spreading Christianity, to which end they fought so many battles with the heathens and stormed so many of their fortresses, large and small, that their victories will be praised in all Christendom until Judgement Day. When the castles mentioned earlier were built and equipped with the help of Christ our Lord and in His praise and honour, and the peoples in the vicinity had bent their stiff necks to the yoke of faith and the brothers' dominion, to which point they could not have been brought without slaughtering many of them or without the willing shedding of much good Christian blood in God's name, and when the same people were established in the power of the faith and had grown greatly in spiritual blessings, the old evil

snake, the poisonous dragon,¹ that bitter opponent of human salvation could not bear this situation to continue for long. He fiercely resented the prosperity and blessedness of Christendom, which was increasing greatly in Prussia at this time, and the fact that the worship of God was spreading far and wide in the region, so that the heathens were disgraced and the Christians increasingly powerful, and that God was revealing new wonders among the new Christians;² to the dog of hell that was a mortal wound. So he began to look for more than a thousand dangerous cunning schemes for shooting poison and pouring his fatal venom into God's new foundation and destroying the tender noble vineyard and all its fruit³ (he was very good at that) and for sowing his weeds in God's fertile fields.⁴ He persisted in this until his falseness took root as he intended it to. He incited groups to carry out brutal persecution of the Christians. It happened like this.

About the revolt the Lord Swantopelk incited against the faith and the country

Lines 5,953–6,036; III, 32

In Pomerelia there was a duke called Swantopelk.⁵ He was intent on evil and blind to all good. He was the devil's spawn and a son of destruction.⁶ His heart and mind were empty of truth and loyalty and full of treachery.⁷ This same Swantopelk began to ally himself with the Prussian people who had recently been converted to the faith after many strenuous hard-fought battles. Under the pretence of friendship he secretly negotiated a terrible plot with these Prussians in which they agreed with this sinful man that they would jointly rebel against the brothers and either destroy them or drive them and everything which called itself Christian out of Prussia by force. When they heard this idea it appealed to them and they fell in with the plan, just as the evil one had wanted.⁸ When the duke had made this shameful agreement with the Prussians, as part of the treacherous plan he quickly fortified those of his castles which were situated near the Vistula, and stationed wicked people there, sinful outcasts who would soon become a dangerous trap and

¹ Revelation 12, 9; 20, 2.

² Ecclesiasticus 36, 6.

³ Matthew 20, 1.

⁴ Matthew 13, 25.

⁵ The Duke Swantopelk of Pomerelia (1212–66) was originally a supporter of the order, but later allied himself with the Prussians when he realised that the order's settlements were threatening his own trade. See Christiansen, *Northern Crusades*, p. 106; Fischer, 'Des tuuils kint?'. Pomerelia is the eastern part of Pomerania and was an independent duchy from 1227 until 1294.

⁶ 2 Thessalonians 2, 3.

⁷ Ecclesiasticus 1, 30.

⁸ 1 Maccabees 1, 12.

a source of harm to the brothers,¹ because they lay in wait and launched ambushes from these same castles on the Vistula, and whatever they caught by way of people or ships which belonged to the brothers, they took prisoner along with their goods and took them off and tormented them terribly.² Some of them were slaughtered with great brutality. They spilled the blood of many a good pure Christian with their terrible misdeeds.³ This happened so often that finally no-one who had any business on behalf of the brothers dared go on the Vistula, or bring up any kind of foodstuffs at all to the brothers who lived at Elbing or Balga or elsewhere in the lands down there, and they suffered such great shortages of supplies as cannot be described. The brothers would rather have suffered this patiently and blamelessly than defend themselves or turn on the duke and take revenge, because he was nominally a Christian.

About a legate from the papal throne

Lines 6,037–168; III, 33

I read that at the same time as this wretched business was going on Innocent IV became pope, and he was told about it in the first year of his papacy (1243 years after Mary gave birth to Christ the saviour) because that steadfast grand master, Brother Hermann von Salza,⁴ told him with tearful protestations about the terrible, brutal harassment the wicked Swantopelk was carrying on against Christian people

¹ 1 Maccabees 1, 34–36.

² 1 Maccabees 1, 32; 5, 2.

³ 1 Maccabees 1, 37.

⁴ In 1243 Gerhard von Malberg (1240–44) was in fact grand master. Both he and his successors, Heinrich von Hohelohe and Günther von Wüllersleben, are omitted from the list of grand masters in the chronicle. Malberg probably tried to continue Hermann von Salza's policy of acting as intermediary between the pope and the emperor, but the rift between the two had become too great for him to be able to carry this policy out successfully. He is thought to have been forced to stand down by the Hohenstaufen faction in the order because he was too close to the papacy. The pope offered him the possibility of joining the Templars, who were opponents of the Hohenstaufen, but he stayed, took back the office of grand master and remained in the Teutonic Order until the pope deposed him in 1245. He was not identified as having been a grand master until 1802. His successor, Heinrich von Hohenlohe (1244–49), a close associate of Hermann von Salza, was a member of the Hohenstaufen faction. His period in office, like Malberg's was characterised by the split in the order between the two factions and by the rebellion in Prussia. He wrote or commissioned an account of the conquest of Prussia from 1220 to 1246, which is one of the sources for Dusburg's chronicle. Günther von Wüllersleben was grand master from 1249 to 1252. Wilhelm von Urenbach was elected grand master by the papal supporters in the order in 1249 in opposition to Wüllersleben, but his influence was limited to Venice. See Udo Arnold (ed.), *Die Hochmeister des Deutschen Ordens, 1190–1994* (Marburg: N. G. Elwert, 1998), pp. 22–7.

and that his persecution was seriously weakening the new young growth of faith in Prussia. The pope was not pleased and immediately sent out a praiseworthy man as legate to Prussia. This was William, bishop of Modena, later elected as pope under the name of Alexander IV.¹ This legate had the full authority of the papal throne to adjudicate between the fighting factions in Prussia. He commanded them to divide the country into four bishoprics so that God would be honoured, praised and glorified even more than before in that land. The same legate sent letters to Swantopelk in which he commanded him, with the full authority of the pope, which he exercised there, that he should no longer pursue his devilish hatred of the pure Christians, whom he had always persecuted with all his might. But the wicked devil had him so firmly under his control that he had completely forgotten the salvation of his soul, so he disobeyed the legate and the pope and afterwards tormented the poor Christians even more than before, on land and at sea. He took prisoners, robbed, burned and brutally murdered everything he came across that called itself Christian. When the legate realised that the evil duke remained wedded to his wicked ways and that none of the warnings he gave him had any effect on him or made him give up his accursed life and rejoin the bosom of the church, he came to the conclusion, and rightly so, as the evil was increasing, that the pains of chastisement should also increase. The legate did not succeed with warnings, or with excommunication in changing the wretch's mind, so he used other means of dealing with his and his supporters' evil. He had a crusade preached against them with the full authority of the pope in all the lands and kingdoms concerned and he commanded the Teutonic Brethren and all those who took the cross to be obedient, and required them, for the forgiveness of all their sins, to fight relentlessly against that evil dog Swantopelk and his lawless band of followers, just like the other heathens, because they had departed from true Christianity as a result of their crimes. This was so that the faith in God and those who upheld His commandments, those pure Christians present in great numbers in Prussia, would

¹ William of Modena, or Sabina (1184–1251) had first arrived in the Baltic in 1225 to adjudicate a settlement in Livonia, co-ordinated the crusade against Novgorod (depicted by Sergei Eisenstein in his film *Alexander Nevsky*) and thereafter was active in negotiating a settlement for the church in Prussia. In 1243 he and Pope Innocent IV divided the territory into the four bishoprics of Kulm, Pomesania, Warmia and Sambia (although the latter had not yet been conquered), apparently in an attempt to rein in the order. In the bishopric of Kulm the bishop received 600 hides of land (approximately 10,000 hectares) and tithes; in the other bishoprics the order had to give up one third of its land. The bishoprics of Kulm, Pomesania and Sambia adopted the rule of the order and in the second half of the thirteenth century the bishops were often members of the order; consequently the order was largely able to maintain its influence. The exception was the bishopric of Warmia, but it too had to recognise the order as its protector. He is thought to have edited the statutes of the order in response to a request to the pope by Gerhard von Malberg to make an alteration to the Rule. See Militzer, *Geschichte*, p. 15; 72–5. Rinaldo di Jenne (1199–1261), not William of Modena, became Alexander IV in 1254.

be relieved of the heavy burden of the terrible persecution which that foul dog constantly inflicted on them.

Of the devastation of lower Prussia

Lines 6,169–240; III, 34

When this had been done Swantopelk, who had completely abandoned all fear of God, became desperate and did an evil thing. Whereas before he had carried out his treachery in secret, he now openly committed a blasphemous act: by dint of his evil cunning he managed to have the new Christians, who were easily led back into their old mistakes, completely give up their faith and wickedly rebel against the brothers all over Prussia. When the Prussians from all over the country had come together in rebellion, this deceitful, disloyal prince became their duke and their commander and travelled with them into lower Prussia, causing great damage and wreaking havoc among the Christians; because with his arm outstretched and weapons in his hand¹ the devil's champion killed and martyred all the old Christians who had come from Germany to protect and promote the faith and had settled there. Their wives and children were taken prisoner in scenes of great wretchedness and kept as slaves in perpetual captivity. It was pitiful to see these noble women who had been brought up as gentlewomen and now had to suffer such painful humiliation and were brutally forced to work. It was the worst imaginable situation for them. Anyone who witnessed the wretchedness and humiliation inflicted on them there should avenge it. Brother Konrad von Dortmund, a pure warrior and careful in battle and warfare, was killed with all his men. In this desperate situation all the fortresses were captured from the Christians by their malevolent visitors, so that none was left under their control in the area between Balga and Elbing.

About the devastation of upper Prussia

Lines 6,241–276; III, 35

Not long after these terrible events Swantopelk, the devil's spawn, threw himself even deeper into the mire of sin, destroying Christendom in his extreme depravity. For a second time he assembled the new, apostate Christians and, armed and hostile, they went with him to the lands of upper Prussia, known as Kulm and Pomesania, and devastated them from top to bottom, looting and burning. They also captured all the fortresses and destroyed all those held by the Christians in both lands, from the smallest to the greatest, apart from the three called Thorn, Kulm and Rehden. They also brutally murdered all the good Christians there, four thousand and more of them, and if I must speak of it at all, they committed such slaughter all over

¹ Deuteronomy 5, 15.

Prussia that the whole country, hill and vale, was red with Christian blood. Alas, this was perpetrated by the evil Swantopelk; may all men curse him for it.

This is how the castle at Sartowitz was captured, where the head of St Barbara was found
Lines 6,277–670; III, 36

Which Christian in his right mind would be so evil as to allow one single enemy to weaken and destroy the faith in this way by his evil deceit, a faith which had been nurtured at such cost and with such hard work in the praise of God, so that it flourished the length and breadth of the land, without wanting to avenge the persecution and terrible suffering with all his might and out of a great sense of pity? So when the brothers saw the worship of God decline and the pitiful trials inflicted on the Christians they were incensed. They would far rather die in battle than see their people and their saints defiled in such attacks.¹ One of these brothers, as I have read, was the former marshal, Brother Dietrich von Bernheim, a knight who was celebrated for his courage and his exploits. His manly virtues equalled those of Ulysses and Hector, those bold heroes of antiquity. He took four other brothers and 24 armed men with him and with them that true man set forth on the eve of St Barbara's Day (as had been previously agreed) to the castle at Sartowitz² (they did this very secretly), where they put up ladders and entered secretly into Swantopelk's stronghold. Inside they found 50 warriors stationed in the castle to guard it. The brothers and their troops bravely began fighting them. Their opponents were more numerous and they were brave too; they defended themselves vigorously and fought back fiercely against the brothers. Both sides fought the other ferociously; sometimes one, sometimes the other side was in trouble and pushed back. The battle lasted from day break until the hour of terce.³ Then God, who never abandons those who trust in Him, looked on His own people, and by the power of heaven gave them the victory over those evil people. Even although they were twice as numerous, the brothers killed the whole garrison apart from a very few who managed to escape. They also captured and tied up the 150 women who had been in the fortress, not including their children. After this the brothers searched all the rooms and found treasure and other goods. While doing this they went down into a cellar where they found a securely locked casket, in which they

¹ 1 Maccabees 3, 59.

² Modern Sartowice, Poland, strategically situated on the Vistula.

³ Nine a.m. Like the other religious orders, the Teutonic Order's day was regulated by the offices of the church. The first prayers, Matins, were held before dawn. Further services were held at three-hourly intervals throughout the day: Lauds, Terce, Sext, Nones and Vespers until the final office, Compline, which was said immediately before bed time. At times of war when it was not possible to observe the correct times, the offices had to be said later in the day.

assumed they would find either silver or gold or other riches. These were indeed there, but not in the form they expected. They could not be expected to know. When the pure Christians opened the box, see, they found a treasure rich in blessings, against which gold and all other riches are filth. Inside the casket was a silver container, in which there was a fine head, which by its shape and hair appeared to be that of a maiden. Of course they did not know whose relic this was or what the story was until they came across a document attached to the head which explained to them beyond any doubt that the head was that of the martyr, the sweet pure beautiful maiden St Barbara. When they saw the dear name Barbara on the document they were immediately overwhelmed with such intense joy that it frightened them and they fell on their faces in front of this worthy relic, thanking God fervently for such a precious gift, given to them in such a miraculous way: they found it on the day on which the maiden's head was hacked off by her own father in far-off Egypt many years ago. I am not going to tell you how the head came to be hidden in the secret chamber in the fortress of Sartowitz, but if anyone wants to find out and to know more about the blessed Barbara's life and martyrdom I will tell him how to find out.¹ He should look in the book about that sweet maiden which was meticulously translated into German by Duke Luder, a prince of the line of Brunswick, and also previously the elected grand master of the Teutonic Order. There he will undoubtedly find what he is looking for. That is all I will say here, and now I will continue to describe how the brothers reacted when God permitted them to find this precious treasure in its casket. In pure delight they lifted up the head and joyfully carried it out of the cellar, shedding many tears in their devotion. An old woman was there, bound along with the women prisoners. When she saw the joy with which they carried the sacred relic she said to the brothers: 'You may well be happy and justly rejoice, because all the good fortune and honour you have received today has been gained for you by the maiden Barbara whose sacred head you are carrying now.' 'How do you know that, and who told you?' the brothers asked her. 'For some time', she replied, 'I have zealously prayed to St Barbara, so she thought of me tonight as I was sleeping alone, and appeared to me three times, belted and with her skirts hitched up like a girl who was about to go on a journey. When I saw her I asked her "Good maiden, where are you going?" And she replied: "I have got ready for the purpose of going to hear mass in Kulm today." When she appeared to me for the third time she came up close to my bed dressed like this and said to me: "My friend, I commend you to God because I am leaving now." Then I was so sad that I started to wake up. Half awake I reached out and tried to catch hold of her but she got away from me. Then I fell out of bed. However, I still wanted to prevent her journey and followed her

¹ This is another addition by Jeroschin celebrating his patron, Luder von Braunschweig. The grand master's Life of St Barbara has not survived, but he was known as a patron of vernacular literature. The capture of the relic of St Barbara led to a cult of the saint in many parts of Prussia, but particularly in the area round Kulm. The finding of the relic is also an implicit endorsement of the order's crusades.

to the door. She got away ahead of me and when I reached the door she had already disappeared from sight. After that I looked everywhere for her and so became aware that you were here, armed, in the castle and I shouted to the guards "Attack! Attack! Guards, wake up. You have not protected us well because the castle is overrun with the enemy." Because of this I have no doubt that St Barbara's prayers to God made it possible for you to capture this castle, and that it is her wish that you should take her head straight away to Prussia, where you will grant her far more respect and honour than she was ever given here.' When the brothers heard these words from the mouth of the old woman they were overcome with joy again and every one of them fell weeping to his knees and together they gave thanks to the good Lord and the magnificent Barbara for acting so graciously to them, as they had just heard. After this Brother Dietrich boldly sent brothers and armed men to occupy the castle and guard it while he himself left with some of the army which had come with him and took the precious bounty, the sacred relic, to Kulm. When they were close to the city an orderly procession of laudable churchmen came out to meet them, wearing ornately decorated ceremonial robes and carrying banners and holy objects. All the ordinary people followed the banners out of the city in pious devotion, every last man and woman. Some were barefoot, others were dressed as penitents. Many were carrying burning candles. So the Christian troop went out pure in heart and with great solemnity to meet the holy relic. When they were close to it they prostrated themselves in the grass, praying out loud to the holy head. Afterwards the clerics lifted their voices in a sweet hymn and went back towards the city with the tender relic. People pushed in all around and made a wondrous sound. The churchmen sang sweetly, the bells rang loudly and the lay people sang pilgrims' hymns, and to put it simply, much joy was heard among the crowd of Christians, in which mingled a great many tears, caused by the intensity of feeling. When the head had been brought with great devotion to the church, a mass was said at once with great solemnity to honour the maiden St Barbara, as was fitting, because this was the anniversary of her martyrdom, when she died in the manner described earlier. This fulfilled the words she had said to the old woman: 'Today I will hear a mass in Kulm'. Now that had come true. When the mass was finished there was more singing as the blessed relic was taken up and carried to the castle for safe-keeping, where it remains in great honour to this very day. The castle is the old one in Kulm; countless people still visit it there today because it is the source of such a torrent of blessings. God performs so many miracles and gives so many signs through the good maiden Barbara that there is no end to them. To cut a long story short: no-one, be he pure or sinful, who has ever gone there in a spirit of devotion looking for blessings from the worthy maiden Barbara, returns without having been granted so many that he proclaims he has experienced a miracle. Miracles are so common that they no longer count as such. It would be a miracle if anyone left there without receiving a pledge of blessing. Blessings on you, Prussia. Rejoice, rejoice ever after that this gift has chosen you as its resting place and to be your companion. Rejoice, rejoice, Teutonic Order especially, that you have been so blessed. You have a secure pledge from St Barbara

that she will never abandon you. Enhance her great honour, so that she binds herself freely to you, always grants you her favours and stays with you forever. Thus you will be protected from all harm and will walk in the path of increasing grace so that your blessings will not cease until the day of judgement. O precious Barbara, stay with us now and drive away our enemies by the power of your bitter martyrdom.

**This is how Sartowitz was besieged and 900 Pomerelians killed
Lines 6,671–804; III, 37**

When Swantopelk realised the truth of the matter, that he had lost Sartowitz to the brothers, his dismay knew no bounds and he returned with all the forces available to him to take his poisonous revenge. He gathered together all the Prussians who had deserted Christianity and began a hostile siege of the castle, launching devastating attacks over a period of five weeks and deploying many different kinds of siege engines used to break down fortresses. However, the brothers and their people who were besieged there defended themselves so bravely and with such vigour that the attacks did not harm them. Because the traitor was so treacherous he went on in this way until he incurred the wrath of God for his sins. He took the greater part of the army with him, leaving the rest to continue the siege of the castle and departed quietly and secretly at night across the ice on the Vistula to Kulm, which he then sacked with great brutality. The marshal we have mentioned before, Brother Dietrich, set off to fight the devil's hordes with a very small group of men, trusting in help from God, who can defeat a large army as easily as a small one and is victorious when He wants to be,¹ and he inflicted such terror on the enemy that day that they suffered terrible losses. Fully nine hundred of them were left for dead on the battlefield; the others escaped by running away. Thus God gave the victory to the brothers' army. They also captured the enemy's horses, about four hundred of them, I have read, as well as a great deal of other booty. That perfidious man Swantopelk escaped with a few of his men, disgraced and dishonoured, back to the army he had left to besiege the castle. He arrived there so quietly that the brothers besieged in the castle had no means of finding out how the battle had gone. So they sent one brother secretly out of the castle to Brother Dietrich to find out what had happened. When he had told him the whole story of the battle he sent him back with the message: 'You too will be rescued today if God has mercy on us. Get ready in the castle, and as soon as you see us engaging the enemy, all of you leave the castle and come down to our assistance.' He finished with the words: 'Whoever wins the battle will also control the castle.' Swantopelk discovered that the marshal had set out intending to fight him again and defeat him and his army, and he had definite proof from the first battle, which he had lost, that God was angry with him and had taken away the shield of his protection because of his sinful behaviour. This made

¹ 1 Maccabees 3, 18–19.

his heart falter and his courage fail him, and he was so afraid that he did not dare confront a smaller troop with a big army but shamefully fled from the scene with his army. When the marshal saw the army was withdrawing he gradually advanced with his men to the empty encampment and burned it down. He did not rush off too quickly after the fleeing army because he foresaw a trap and feared the trickery of the duke, who was like a fox who contrives to outwit his hunter by his cunning. He did not dare follow him but stayed there for the day with his men and worked at repairing the damage to the castle from the assaults of the siege engines. When dusk fell he left more armed men there than there had been before and left.

**This is how the brothers captured Nakel and how Pomerelia was devastated
Lines 6,805–70; III, 38**

Now the legate we have discussed before expended great care and energy in trying to bring about the downfall of Swantopelk, that persecutor of the faith, and in making the Christians and the faith flourish. Since he saw that the war was now progressing quite well under the control of the Teutonic Brethren, he sent for the princes of Poland, Duke Casimir and the duke of Kalisz¹ and the most senior brothers and encouraged them to mount a joint campaign against Swantopelk, that terrible scourge of God, with all their people. They were happy to obey the legate; they quickly assembled a mighty army against Swantopelk and went to his castle, Nakel,² and immediately pitched camp on the field in front of the castle according to knightly practice. Then they set up trebuchets in front of the castle and all sorts of machinery used to break down fortifications. When those who were occupying the castle on Swantopelk's behalf saw all the construction work they were afraid and negotiated safety for themselves and their possessions and handed over the castle without a fight. The victors garrisoned the castle with brothers and many men and then along with the rest of the army they turned back towards Pomerelia, which God's army harried from top to bottom and from one side to the other. On this campaign they burned everything of Swantopelk's which could be consumed by fire. In the course of the campaign they killed all the men they came across; they drove off the women and children and a huge amount of plunder. When they had completely devastated it they joyfully returned to their own countries.

¹ Duke Casimir I of Kujavia (1211–67) and Boleslaw the Pious (1221–79), duke of Greater Poland. Swantopelk's brothers Sambor and Ratibor were also part of the alliance against him.

² Modern Nakło and Notecią, Poland. Like Sartowitz, this castle was strategically important because it dominated trade on the Noteć river.

**This is how peace was made between Lord Swantopelk and the brothers
Lines 6,871–986; III, 39**

After events had happened as I have described, by the grace of God, who makes all things happen, Swantopelk, that stupid man, who had previously been so stubborn and set in his unbelief that no-one had been able to deflect him from sin either with pleas or bribery or threats or make him turn back as a true believer to the bosom of the holy church, which he had left so wickedly, now began to see sense as a result of these efforts, and he realised he was trapped. He was also so weak that he was neither able nor willing to resist the brothers any more; therefore he adopted a different tactic. He appeared contritely before the legate and the brothers and said calmly, 'I am sorry; I have blasphemed against my God and the champions of His laws. I regret this and am sorry for it and I plead fervently that you treat me mercifully and show pity to me, because I want to make amends to God for everything. So that you believe me, I offer you my head. Take me prisoner with everything over which I once exercised power, so that my soul is made whole again. Let this be your compensation.' After these words the legate consulted the brothers. He said: 'We are used to the fact that he has often broken his oaths to keep the peace. It is hard to believe him now.' On the other hand he also took into account the fact that the door of mercy should never be closed on anyone who truly seeks it. As a result of these deliberations the legate concluded that the best thing was to preserve the peace. He also reasoned that the creator of peace is only honoured at times of peace. Therefore he accepted him into the grace of the church as the brothers had recommended, but with the reservation that there should be a peace treaty between Swantopelk and the brothers and no more hostilities. As a pledge of this he gave them his castle of Sartowitz, of which we have spoken earlier. In addition he gave them his noble eldest son, called Mestwin, as a hostage, as well as his burgrave Wimar and his commander Woyac. As an even greater assurance that he was now committed to peace, he swore with his hand on the Gospels that he would always assist the brothers against all unbelievers and that he would no longer in any way fight against the faith or against God's Christendom as he had before. With regard to these matters he gave the brothers a deed sealed with his seal confirming and guaranteeing these agreements. When these things had been completed all his prisoners were returned from wherever they were in the country, among them 70 noble women and many other women and children and other household members high and low. The brothers enforced the terms of the treaty so strictly that they would never afterwards ride out against the heathens or fight against them without his advice.

**This is about Swantopelk's second rebellion and the battle on the Rensen
Lines 6,987–7,218; III, 40**

But since men's minds are easily turned to mischief and the habits of youth stay with them into old age,¹ the treacherous Swantopelk could not avoid this either. He showed his innate evil when a year had passed. He forgot his salvation and the oath he had made of his own free will for the preservation of peace, and this evil man even forgot his own flesh and blood, that is to say his own son and the others of his men whom he had sent as hostages to the brothers, as I mentioned before. He broke the peace which he had sworn to uphold and which he had pledged with his seal. Instead his treacherous spirit inspired him to gather together all the apostates once more, and a large number of Sudovians, with whom he went to the land of Kulm. There they murdered and burned and caused great suffering, and in short, devastated the whole country, so that you would not have known there were villages, towns or fortresses there apart from Thorn, Kulm and Rehden. Once the devil's hordes had raged through the country and exhausted it they went to Kulm, where they arrogantly and insolently remained for the whole day until evening.² Then they went off to pitch camp at marshland which had its source in the lake of Rensen.³ The brothers in the castle at Kulm at this time were incensed by the suffering which had taken place and having to watch Christian women, children and many men being driven off by the heathens into perpetual slavery. So when they saw that the heathens had pitched camp near the marsh they went out after them at night with 400 men. When the heathens were half way across the swamp Brother Dietrich, the old marshal, wanted to attack the men at the rear. He said: 'Let us fight here because before those on the other side can come back these here will be dead.' The senior brothers among them agreed with this, but Brother Berlwin, the new marshal, disagreed. 'No', he said, 'I think it would be much better to attack those at the front.' Again the senior brothers argued against this, because they thought that if they attacked the enemy at the front they would be forced to defend themselves and would not be able to escape. But although the most senior of them thought it was a mistake, they followed him quickly and rode to attack the front of the army, which immediately took flight. The Christian army set off in pursuit in the tracks of the enemy for some distance through the pine forest. Many of the heathens were left for dead on the heath. While the Christian army was dispersed all around, the marshal and 24 Christians came to a hill. There he found 4,000 Prussians preparing for battle, and when they saw the brothers'

¹ Proverbs 22, 6.

² Psalms 31, 18.

³ According to Scholz and Wojtecki in Peter von Dusburg, *Chronik des Preussenlandes*, translated into German and annotated by Klaus Scholz and Dieter Wojtecki, *Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters* 25 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984), p. 149, this probably refers to the lake called Ronsen in German, which is now in Grudziądz-Rądz district, Poland.

flag appearing in front of them so ill-defended and with such a small number of Christians all their cowardice disappeared; they rose up together in battle against him and killed the marshal and his companions. Afterwards they began to reconnoitre, looking for the brothers and their men and fighting sporadically until they had killed all the brothers and 400 of their men in total, all but ten, who fled the scene separately and thus saved their lives. The brothers of Thorn came rushing up with 200 men just after this happened, at the time and to the place the marshal had told them; when they saw the carnage and suffering and the brothers and their men slaughtered they lost no time in fleeing from that place. The Prussians chased after them. During the flight many Christians were killed by the Prussians.¹ After events had gone entirely as Swantopelk and his criminal followers would have wished, the heathens gathered together their plunder, of which there was a great deal, including a large number of women and children and some men, and drove everything away amid much rejoicing. Among the prisoners was Martin, known as Golin, a brave warrior, and a pregnant woman, his sister. When, because of the weight of the child, she was no longer able to keep pace with the army which was hurrying home, the man who had taken her prisoner became very angry with her because she lagged behind and could not keep up, so he mercilessly cut open her body so that the child fell out alive onto the sand and the woman died. This crime and the suffering affected Martin so much that he conceived a great hatred towards the heathens, so that after being released from captivity by them he persecuted them and slaughtered them mercilessly, as you will hear later. When the army had left the country and the brothers saw the evil that had happened there and the great misery inflicted on the poor Christians, they said to each other in great distress: 'Woe on us, why were we born, since our lives are so full of misery and we must look on as our people are hacked to pieces and wiped out or driven off? Woe to us Lord God, alas and alas. Are we now to see our land fall into the hands of the enemy? Alas for wise old men who ruled this land and who now lie terribly murdered, and also the young bold heroes felled by the enemy's sword. This is our lament to you, lord; maidens and children who had been free are now in eternal slavery and suffer piteously. This land, which was once full of people and wondrously fertile, now see how devastated it is! The churches have been burned down and their ornaments removed; all our beauty has been destroyed and we have been pitilessly attacked by the evil heathens; they rule over us in terror, they have power over us; alas, why should we go on living?' Then the brothers tore their clothes and put on their mourning clothes.² The grieving Christians who had stayed on wept in distress with them.

¹ The battle at Rensen took place in 1244.

² 1 Maccabees 2, 6–14.

About a miracle which happened there
Lines 7,219–92; III, 41

It was normal that after fighting the grieving female citizens of Kulm went out of the city to the battlefield to take away their dead and bury them according to Christian practices. There was one among them who found that her husband was still clinging to life. Although the woman tried to take him to Kulm he resisted. ‘Let me die here,’ he said. Everyone standing around him asked: ‘What do you mean by asking to be left to die here?’ ‘I will explain it to you,’ he said. ‘Today I had a wonderful vision of the pure maid who bore Jesus Christ for us, our ever-virgin comforter Mary. She carried a sweetly smoking censer in her hand. She walked around all the bodies of the Christian lying here dead and acknowledged each one, sweetly blessing them with the smoke. Finally she came to me and when she realised I was still alive she spoke sweetly and comfortingly to me: “My dear warrior, bear this suffering cheerfully. On the third day your complaints will be at an end because you will die and receive your heavenly wages with indescribable joy, as all these who gave up their lives for me have done already.” And with these words the sweet pure maiden disappeared from my sight.’ They took the wounded man back to Kulm, where he died on the third day as he had predicted. Because everything had happened as he said, all the people there believed him and gave thanks to God and His mother, our commander, Mary the queen, who has taken away all suffering and graciously honours all those who suffer in her name.

About two women fighting for one man
Lines 7,293–362; III, 42

After this battle against the enemy the bishop of Kulm realised that the town was empty of men (because they had all died in the battle) so he called all the widows to a meeting and proposed to them all their sins would be forgiven if they married their man servants, so that the faith did not completely die out and suffer defeat once more by the enemy’s actions. As a result it happened that two women on their way to church to worship, as usual, noticed a young man playing dice among a group of peasants; he was bold, strongly built, handsome and fresh-faced but his clothes were very poor quality. One of these women said surreptitiously to her maid, ‘Do you see that boy out there? Bring him to the inn and tell him to wait there until I return – it will be worth his while.’ The other understood her meaning straight away, so she sent her maid off secretly, saying, ‘Run and be careful. Have you seen that young man? Do not let him out of your sight. Take him home with you and don’t let him go. Take good care of him until I get back.’ The second woman was bolder and quicker than the first so she succeeded in keeping the boy. When she came home she dressed him handsomely from head to foot and married him. When the one who had sent her maid out first heard how she had been outwitted and beaten to the boy, for a long time afterwards she was consumed by hate and

jealousy of the one who had cheated her and stolen the boy from her. This boy had come down from Halle, where he was born, and afterwards was so famous for his wisdom and praised for his virtue that he was unrivalled in Prussia.

About the brothers' concerns after the battle

Lines 7,363–90; III, 43

The frenzied Swantopelk rejoiced greatly in the fact that the brothers had been killed and began to heap insult on injury, suffering on suffering and constantly inflicted bitter wounds on the brothers. He focused all his energies on how to change the loyalties of the people who were subject to the brothers and were now in great danger as his prisoners, and bring them over to his side by his treachery. He did this secretly with gifts and promises and he deluded many of them so that they went over to him, but by their far-sightedness the brothers managed to maintain God's order so that no-one dared support him openly or say publicly that he was trying to influence them, so his treachery was unsuccessful.

This is about how Swantopelk devastated Kulmerland and how his army drowned

Lines 7,391–518; III, 44

I read that when Swantopelk did not achieve his aim of disgracing Christianity through his treachery, he found another more troublesome and serious way of doing it. He thought the time had come his hatred and envy had long hoped for, when he could set his sword against the poor Christians, who had little left remaining to them in Prussia after the last battle, and extinguish whatever feeble glow of the spark of faith still glimmered there without serious opposition. He took 2,000 battle-hardened men with him, travelled by ship to the other side of the Vistula, and went into the Kulmerland. There he and his devilish force destroyed and burned for two days and nights everything the Prussians had left across the whole region. While he was rampaging across the country carrying out this atrocity, the brothers in Kulm assembled with all their people, the nobles and the townspeople, and seeing that their persecutor was perpetrating such evil they became very downhearted. In their grief they sighed and wept. They beat their chests and cried pitifully. 'Lord, have mercy on us, have mercy on your poor people whom Swantopelk is persecuting and on whom he is inflicting such bitter suffering. O dear God, do not completely abandon your inheritance to the devil.'¹ What more can I say? The plight of the Christians was as bad as could be. Subjected to this ferocious persecution the brothers reasoned that if they attacked the enemy but did not win, Prussia would be lost, along with the hope that the land

¹ Joel 2, 17.

would ever be in the hands of the Christians. The faith would disappear forever; that would weigh heavily on their consciences. The nobles and the townspeople gathered there from Kulm said to the brothers that they would rather go honestly to their deaths and die in battle than die a living death.¹ Then the powerful spirit of God came among the brothers and everyone there, and although their troops would have been inadequate on their own against the enemy's army, nevertheless they trusted in God, that He would support them. They attacked the enemy in front of the city of Kulm and a fierce battle ensued between them. Many fell on both sides. Finally the Father of mercy saw His people's distress, He who very sweetly gives strength and comfort to His people in all times of trouble,² and He gave the brothers and their supporters such power that Swantopelk and all his army were afraid. They would have turned in flight without further ado to the place on the Vistula where they had left their boats, but praise be to God, that did not happen, because as if by a miracle a stiff wind blew up and blew the ships far off shore. That was very serious for the enemy. Their experience with their ships was the same as Baligan's, the king of the Saracens, who fled defeated with his army from the Emperor Charlemagne.³ The same thing happened to these here: when they reached the shore and could not see their ships they were made to look completely foolish, since they had no way of escaping the brothers. They had no other option but to drown in the Vistula. Only Swantopelk escaped with a few of his supporters. All the others who had escaped the sword died in the waters of the Vistula. So our good, gracious God helped his people in a time of great need.⁴

This is about how a truce was agreed again with Swantopelk and how he broke it and built the castle of Zantir
Lines 7,519–636; III, 45

The brothers took some pleasure from their success, but they were very concerned because their power had been seriously weakened since all their supporters had been killed, as you heard earlier. So they were at a loss and sought advice everywhere as to how they could hold the country they were ruling so tenuously and at such great cost. At that time there was a brother at Rehden called Rabe who was known for his sound advice and valiant exploits. He gave the brothers this advice: that they should send Mestwin, Swantopelk's son, who had been given to them as a hostage and as security for the peace, without delay to the duke of Austria,⁵ and that they should act decisively in getting news of their situation to

¹ 1 Maccabees 3, 59.

² 2 Corinthians 1, 3–4.

³ See *Das Rolandslied des Pfaffen Konrad*, lines 7044–64; 8571–94.

⁴ Isaiah 49, 13.

⁵ Frederick II the Quarrelsome or Warlike (1211–46). From 1239 he was one of the most important allies of the Emperor Frederick II.

people in Germany, Bohemia and Poland and wherever else they might expect help, making known the difficulties facing Prussia along with the fact that the faith would be completely wiped out there if God did not prevent it soon, and that it was their duty to help. When this dreadful news was made widely known in these countries Master Poppo came at once with four brothers. In addition six strong brothers came quickly from Meissen and from the Marches and Thuringia. The duke of Austria also made his own virtuous contribution. He sent 30 mounted crossbowmen for use in battle at his own expense. Hooray! How happy the poor brothers and their people were to see these guests! But Swantopelk, however, was frightened by this news. He was so overwhelmed by fear that he sued for peace and forgiveness from the brothers. He promised so much that they really believed him and renewed the old peace treaty once more. Nonetheless, he did not give up his innate evil nature. He constantly tormented the brothers in any way he could, with premeditated wickedness, and he paid little attention to anyone who threatened to punish him for his treachery. Finally, whereas before he had been secretive, the evil one began to allow his falseness to be seen openly. He assembled a strong force and despite all protestations he marched on Kujavia in Duke Casimir's land. There he looted and burned on a grand scale. He killed many Christians. He also took many prisoners. Then the evil one carried off his plunder, both people and goods, and when he was asked about it, he replied proudly: 'Yes, I will persecute my enemies as I please and neither the emperor or the pope nor any other man alive will stop me.' To the brothers in particular he said: 'If you want to be at peace with me I demand that you return my son at once.' Since they had no intention of doing that, he persecuted them even more ferociously than before. After this he rapidly built a castle he called Zantir¹ situated where the Vistula and the Nogat meet, garrisoned the castle with faithless men capable of all manner of evil and from then on they refused to allow the brothers' servants and their men to sail up or down the river without being attacked, wounded, robbed or killed.

This is about how Schwetz was built and how it was stormed
Lines 7,637–776; III, 46

When the brothers realised that yet again Swantopelk was fomenting uprisings against them in his arrogance, they gave their ally, his son Sambor,² the castle at Sartowitz with all the rights and equipment there. Now you may have noticed a strange miracle in all of this: that Swantopelk's son had rebelled against him because of his brutal ill-treatment of the Christians and the faith. When they had done this the brothers speedily sent messengers to the papal legate who was in Germany at this time. They also sent letters to the grand master explaining how

¹ The precise location of this castle has not been established. When the Marienburg was built it was dismantled.

² Sambor was in fact Swantopelk's brother.

things stood in Prussia with regard to Swantopelk. When the legate heard the news he himself set about preaching a crusade against that evil dog and gave immediate orders that a crusade should also be preached in all the surrounding kingdoms. But because evil men are so wicked and impure that they rejoice in doing evil, the miscreant was pleased that he had caused such damage and great difficulties to the Christians with his fortress of Zantir, and he began to build another castle on the banks of the Vistula half a mile from where the city of Kulm now stands on the opposite bank. He called the castle Schwetz.¹ The godless man intended to prevent the brothers from sailing up or down the river. When the master realised he had started building, he ordered the brothers at Kulm to sail downriver with their men while he himself planned to take to horse with the brothers at Thorn and Duke Casimir and come to their assistance at Schwetz. The master wanted to prevent the construction of the castle if at all possible. When Swantopelk saw the brothers in the ships landing to launch their attack he struck camp, destroyed the bridge which gave access to the castle and fled. But when he saw that the army on horseback had realised that they could not join the men in the ships from Kulm because the water between them was too deep, his courage returned and he headed back to the castle with his troops. When he grasped that the master was planning to storm the new castle he rapidly rebuilt the bridge he had destroyed and took his army across it. He left 300 men whose task was to defend the castle against the brothers. At this point the brothers' army and Duke Casimir approached and began a bold and sustained attack against the castle, which was defended by its garrison. They were deadly enemies. The battle was so violent that many on both sides were seriously wounded. But because the castle was so secure it was not easily captured, so the brothers could not make any headway and Swantopelk quickly returned with his men and made the fortifications even stronger.

How the Castle of Potterberg was built **Lines 7,777–806; III, 47**

Brother Poppo, grand master of the Order,² studied Swantopelk's cunning tactics and noticed that it was his practice to defend himself by building and repairing fortresses. He wanted to protect Prussia from future attacks by Swantopelk.

¹ Modern Świecie, Poland.

² In fact Poppo von Osterna did not become grand master until 1252. As noted above (p. 90, note 4), the chronicle avoids mention of the three men who were grand masters at the time when the order was internally split between supporters of the papacy and the Hohenstaufen. Frederick II had died two years earlier, in 1250, and Pope Innocent IV died in 1254. This may have allowed Poppo von Osterna to reconcile the two factions. However, his period in office was evidently also not without problems. He was forced to stand down and his request for another high office was refused. He died in 1267. See Klaus Militzer, 'Poppo von Osterna', in Arnold (ed.), *Hochmeister*, pp. 27–9.

Between Althaus¹ and present day Kulm there is a high secure hill on which he had built a castle which he called Potterberg, after the hill. He garrisoned the castle with twelve true brothers and many armed men. The grand master built this castle so that disloyal opponents could not fortify the hill themselves to attack the Christians.

This is about the storming of the city and castle at Elbing
Lines 7,807–50; III, 48

Lord Swantopelk became aware that the brothers and their people at Elbing had gone away. When the enemy of God heard this he assembled a powerful army and marched on Elbing. Because there was no-one there he hoped to capture the city and the fortress without encountering any resistance. When the women of Elbing realised the danger of an attack they all took off their women's garments and clothed themselves in the weapons and courage of men. They went out on the battlements and conducted the defence so bravely that none of these pure women gave any sign of cowardice.² When the army saw this they could all have sworn that the brothers had returned with the men of the town. So the women manfully drove away Swantopelk, who retreated shamefully. This happened many more times in the country: when the men were away at war many castles would have been lost to the enemy if they had not been defended by brave women in the guise of warriors.

This is about one of Swantopelk's knights
Lines 7,851–944; III, 49

Among the vicious Swantopelk's men was a retainer, a knight, who was so afraid of the brothers that wherever he heard the name of the Teutonic Order he was so frightened that his whole body shook. One day Lord Swantopelk happened to visit one of his villages to pass the time and gathered a few of his knights for some fun. For their amusement he intended to play a trick to make them all laugh. So he quietly said to some of them: 'Don't tell anyone what we're about to do. We will send a page out into the countryside, and once we have had something to eat he is to come rushing back saying that the brothers' army is coming to attack us, and then we can laugh at what that cowardly knight does.' The lords

¹ Modern Starogród, Poland, the original site of Kulm and still the centre of the cult of St Barbara.

² For a discussion of this and other similar incidents, see Rasa Mažeika, "Nowhere was the Fragility of their Sex Apparent": Women Warriors in the Baltic Crusade Chronicles', in Alan V. Murray (ed.), *From Clermont to Jerusalem: The Crusades and Crusader Societies, 1095–1500*. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), pp. 229–47.

complied, laughing among themselves, saying it would be very amusing. They sent off the messenger. Now as luck would have it, the brothers had found out about the trick they were playing and they were approaching that same village. The man realised this and took fright. He rushed back to the village, unsheathing his sword and waving it about. Pale and shouting he rushed straight back to where his lord Swantopelk was. 'Get up,' he said, 'flee, for God's sake. I am not joking when I tell you that the brothers are heading this way to attack us.' When the men who had arranged the joke heard this they laughed heartily. But that knight took the news very seriously. When the brothers were mentioned the colour left his cheeks, he leapt over the table and ran away as fast as he could, causing great mirth. But when the messenger realised that the others thought he was joking, he repeated himself on his oath: 'I am warning you it is true that the brothers are now very near.' The wicked duke went off on his own with one of his men. The other men waited where they were. When the duke turned and began to run away one of the brothers pursued him as he had been ordered to do. Since he could not catch up with the duke, who was his real target, he killed the man instead in a river. None of Swantopelk's other men escaped because the brothers captured and killed them all.

This is about a battle between ships
Lines 7,945–8,002; III, 50

This same Brother Poppo, the grand master, was constantly striving to increase the safety of the Christians, to the honour of God, so he sent Brother Konrad, known as Bremer, and some armed men, to travel to Elbing with three ships laden with supplies of food, to the great delight of the Christians there. When they approached the fortress at Zantir they saw that Swantopelk was there with his men, waiting for them in 20 ships. When Brother Konrad saw what he was up against he was not afraid. His heart trusted in God and he commanded his men to row powerfully towards the enemy, which they did: they rowed with all their strength straight downstream towards the Pomerelian ships and they hit them so hard that many flipped over, keel up, deck side down in the water. The others all broke up. Many Poles could be seen thrashing in the water as their stomachs became fish traps. When the enemy saw the brothers' ships approaching the riverbank they ran up with stones and threw them at the crew, to the great distress of Brother Konrad, one of whose teeth was knocked out. Many of the others were also injured in the attack. This notwithstanding, they and their cargo all arrived safely in Elbing, where they recovered from their injuries.

Another naval battle
Lines 8,003–54; III, 51

The brothers who were at Elbing at that time had been waiting for these ships under difficult conditions, because they had nothing to eat. When they were informed how things stood in the Kulmerland they immediately sent a ship with more messengers from among their own ranks, and when these were approaching Schwetz, Swantopelk gathered a great many men, armed and with ten ships, to harass the Christians. He attacked with these forces. The duke's captain attacked Brother Friedrich von Weida, who was in charge of the sailors. He set about him ferociously and kept on attacking until he had pierced his cheek with a spear. However, Brother Friedrich repaid him for this by killing him on the spot. At the same time the brothers hurriedly rowed their ships up to harry the enemy until the water became so shallow that one of the boats grounded on the sand and could not move backwards or forwards. The enemy attacked it, inflamed with their hatred, and had killed two brothers before Brother Friedrich arrived; he rescued his companions and took them on board his ship. Two brothers and three of their retainers were killed. Twenty of the enemy died; the others all escaped.

This is about a nobleman who joined the Teutonic Order
Lines 8,055–90; III, 52

Not long after this there was such a shortage of food supplies in the convents of Prussia that the brothers and their people suffered greatly. They were nearly dead of hunger. They prayed fervently to God, whose sweet generosity is always there to console the oppressed, that he would send help and alleviate their suffering. God did so because He is good. He inspired a man from Cracow to give up the world's vanities and join the order. This man sent out three great ships in advance of his arrival, fully laden with wine, mead and other foodstuffs. He also sent 300 cattle, horses and much other livestock. He sent all of this off to the house at Thorn. Afterwards he himself arrived and the whole country rejoiced. He was received with great honour and dignity. He put on the order's habit and the whole country was released from great suffering.

How the brothers killed 1,050 Pomerelians in battle
Lines 8,091–154; III, 53

Grand Master Poppo secretly sent out spies to find out what Swantopelk was planning or what he was doing. In the meantime the grand master had also sent for Duke Casimir. His army and the order's army met at the castle of Wyszogród. The commanders of both armies ordered their men to set up camp there and stay hidden quietly until the time came. Then the two spies returned and reported that

Swantopelk was at Schwetz with a large army and was fortifying the castle. All of them agreed it would be wise to attack him there. Ten men from Kulm were sent out in advance on horseback with instructions to skirmish with the enemy and harry the army. They accordingly darted back and forth and harassed them. While they were doing this a troop of about twenty men broke out of the ranks of the enemy army. They set off against the ten men and fought fiercely with them. That continued until one of them was dead, a knight from the enemy troop. At the same time, the others became aware of the brothers' banner and they all fled back to Swantopelk, whereupon he too took flight with his whole army. Some of them escaped to the castle: they survived; all of the others were swallowed up by the waters of the river or died by the sword. This is how it happened that on that day the brothers killed 1,050¹ Pomerelians. All the brothers gave great thanks to God and the Virgin Mary for this victory. That was a wonderful sound, for all their sadness was now at an end. They took great plunder away with them and the army returned home happy.

About a sign

Lines 8,155–264; III, 54

I read that about this time a pilgrim from Meissen came to Prussia, having taken up the cross against the heathens. He had taken an oath to stay in Prussia for one year. At the end of this time he was returning home and on his way home he died. He had a son who became very fearful because his father's return had been delayed so long. Finally he set out to look for him in Prussia. When he could not find him he set off home again. According to the story he came to a village where the bishop was consecrating a churchyard. As the bishop went to and fro, stepping over the graves, a wonderful thing happened. He saw one of the graves opening and out of it jumped the dead man who had been buried there not long before. The man went up to the church and leaned on the wall. This miracle was only witnessed by the bishop, but the holy man asked that it should be revealed to everyone there. The bishop then asked the dead man to tell him the truth about when he had lived and who he was and why he had left his grave in this way. The dead man said: 'I was a pilgrim for God in Prussia for one year, and when I set out to go home, death caught up with me and I was buried here. Because during my lifetime I had wickedly and deceitfully stolen one of my neighbour's fields, I was destined to be lost to the bitter torment of a fate of eternal damnation. But because before I died I had vowed to devote myself to taking revenge for God on the enemies of Christ and His cross, my sentence has been reduced from the torments of hell to the flames of purgatory, where I must stay until my friends return the field to its rightful owner; then I will be released from my torment and experience the

¹ Jeroschin has either corrected the number or misread Dusburg, who puts the dead at 1,500.

consolations of heaven.' When this had happened as I have described, the bishop looked around and asked if anyone knew this man. The son said: 'Yes, my lord. The dead man is my father and I vow here and now that I will give the field back to the person my father wickedly stole it from. I swear this today.' Then the bishop showed pity on him and said, 'Good man, now lie down again in your grave; may God grant you peace.' And so it happened. The grave closed again. Note the mercies Christ shows to His loyal pilgrims, alive or dead. Anyone who comes here in person in times of trouble with his equipment and is ready and willing to protect the holy church according to his powers against the fierce heathen peoples will be rewarded with eternal life in heaven.

About a battle where 1,500 Pomerelians were killed
Lines 8,265–477; III, 55

After the papal legate, about whom you have already heard, had himself announced the preaching of a crusade and decreed that it was to be preached in all the kingdoms and regions in all parts of Germany, many princes and lords in Germany were deeply moved by the distress the poor Christians were suffering in Prussia.¹ So the virtuous duke of Austria sent his steward, Drusiger, and many knights and other highly skilled warriors, as I have read. Lord Heinrich von Liechtenstein, a virtuous knight, also came, bringing many pilgrims with him. Along with these guests and Duke Casimir, the master and his men quickly took themselves off into Pomerelia and launched attacks across the whole country, burning and plundering for nine days and nights. With this force the master covered the ground so thoroughly that there was not a single corner which was spared burning and looting. While this was happening Swantopelk gathered together a huge army, made up of his Pomerelians and some of those Prussians he was always inciting to leave the brothers and reject the baptism they had received, and set off after the brothers. He was worried and in a hurry to take revenge and win back what had been taken. He followed them swiftly, always camping at night at the spot which the brothers had left with their army that morning on their way home. He had his chargers and other mounts stabled in the same places the brothers had kept their horses. The tents were counted, as were the tracks on the ground. In this way the evil Swantopelk was able to establish that his army was twice as big as the brothers' army. This gave him cause for great rejoicing. He comforted his men, saying: 'Be happy and stop grieving. Tomorrow morning, we will inflict such harm on the Germans that the Prussians and Pomerelians will be free of their yoke and the misery of tyranny for evermore.' In the morning, when the brothers' army was leaving its lodgings,

¹ Scholz and Wojtecki, in Peter von Dusburg, *Chronik des Preussenlandes*, p. 169, nn. 58–59, suggest that the legate in question is not William of Modena but Opizo of Mezzano, sent to Prussia in October 1245 and the sermons are those preached by Innocent IV in September of the same year.

several men from Swantopelk's army ran to the wagons of plunder (there was so much of it that it covered two miles) and killed about 30 men from the troop who were guarding it. When the master heard the news, Drusiger was sent at once to help them. When he saw that so many of his friends had been killed, like a coward he took fright and ran away. Lord Heinrich von Liechtenstein noticed this so he at once rushed among the enemy and they disappeared before him like dust. He recovered the booty which they had recaptured. When Swantopelk heard this he arrived quickly to help with three troops of men. When the Kujavians saw so many of the enemy approaching them they forgot all discipline and took flight, all except one knight, called Martin of Kruszwica, who was entrusted with carrying their banner, and Duke Casimir. The duke advised them to send quickly for Lord Heinrich von Liechtenstein.¹ In the meantime the brothers and all their men joined battle. When Swantopelk saw that the brothers did not intend to retreat before him he selected about 1,000 of his best men and instructed them to get down off their chargers to face the battle and that they should shout and make a great noise and attack the brothers, holding their shields in front of them, and thrust their spears at the Christians' horses. 'I will easily win', he said, 'if they attack, because their weapons are so heavy that they cannot turn in either direction and cannot fight.' After the armies on both sides had taken up position for the battle, Lord Heinrich von Liechtenstein rejoined the group. When he looked at the enemy he immediately said to the brothers, 'Don't hesitate, that's my advice, because any delay will damage you.' So they set off bravely against the enemy and closed with them in the name of God. A very fierce battle then ensued, which nonetheless had a very happy ending for the Christian heroes, because that day they killed 1,500 of the enemy on the battlefield, while none of the Christians died. However, ten of their horses were killed, impaled by the enemy as Swantopelk had instructed. When the strife of battle had ended in their favour (which can only have been the work of God), the brothers and the pilgrims set off homewards again, taking with them 1,600 war horses, other horses, and weapons and goods they had won from the enemy for which I have no figures, and the glory of victory, which had been given them as a sign by the hand of God. Praise be to the name of Jesus Christ for ever more, amen! Drusiger the steward had in the meantime taken very bad news to Thorn. As I mentioned before he had run away like a coward with his men. He had announced publicly that the master and the whole Christian army had been killed in the battle. That caused greater grief and mourning in the lands of Kulm and Poland than any they had ever known before. But the next day at the time of vespers, when the army in all its might came back victorious, how the grieving Christians rejoiced! Their joy was so great that the sound of their rejoicing was even greater than the grief of the day before.

¹ Prince Henry I of Liechtenstein, died 1265/6.

**How the brothers brought about a reconciliation with Lord Swantopelk
Lines 8,478–527; III, 56**

Now that Pomerelia had been laid waste and burned down and razed to the ground by God's just decree, Lord Swantopelk, who had once defiantly held his head high, always on the look-out for a way by which by force or treachery he might destroy and plunder the faith across Prussia, recently planted there with Christian blood, much of which had been shed by that evil man himself at the whim of the devil, and who used to roar like a lion, now he became as quiet as a lamb. His head hung low and with the expression of a peaceful man he approached the brothers begging humbly that they would deign to receive him, as they often had in the past. The brothers also remembered that even if he was in trouble and powerless and he and his men appeared to be sincere, that under his lamb's skin beat the heart of a fox, full of treachery and intent on causing suffering to the Christians (as shown by the eventual outcome, for this was the third time he broke the truce he had sworn on his oath to the brothers), and they were afraid that he would deceive them yet again. Nonetheless, we should always sincerely strive for peace and because Christ himself loves and creates peace, after much discussion the brothers made peace with him once more.

**About Brother Heinrich von Weida, the third Master of Prussia, in the year
of our Lord 1247
Lines 8,528–69; III, 57**

Brother Heinrich von Weida was the third Master of Prussia and held the office for eight years.¹ He brought the lord of Weida to Prussia with 50 hand-picked brave warriors whose brave exploits were renowned far and wide, and a number of other noblemen, who had been moved by the love of God to leave various parts of Germany to fight in the name of the church, also came with him. The same Brother Heinrich had been married, and nonetheless he decided to put on the habit of the Teutonic Order; the woman to whom he had been married gave her consent and she herself entered a nunnery called Cronschwitz which Brother Heinrich had built himself and endowed with great riches.² Afterwards he was buried there (but not until many hard battles had been fought, which he fought bravely and honestly in his role as master, as will become clear later), because the grand master had invited him to a convocation and on the way he became ill of a fever from which he died and was buried as described earlier.

¹ In fact, he is thought to have been master in Prussia from 1239 to 1244.

² Jutta von Weida founded a convent for nuns in the Dominican Order in Cronschwitz, Thuringia in 1238.

How the brothers captured a castle and named it Christburg
Lines 8,570–617; III, 58

When Brother Heinrich was informed by the brothers of the evil misdeeds being inflicted on the poor Christians in Prussia by the treacherous Swantopelk and his followers, the apostate Christians, to glorify the devil, he resolved to take revenge by destroying them and raising up the holy faith. He devoted all his energy to this end so he assembled his brothers and the pilgrims and set off on a campaign. On the journey, on Christmas Eve, he and his army secretly approached a Pomerelian castle, at the spot where the walls of the old Christburg stand to this day. Because it was the middle of the night and the whole garrison was fast asleep, they put their ladders against the walls and climbed into the castle without any difficulty, and killed or captured everyone who was there. As I have read, the master also garrisoned it with brothers and armed men to defend and guard it. And because the good Lord Christ gave them this victory that night, when they captured the castle from the enemies of Christ, they called it Christburg.¹ This name did not come from the inventiveness of men, but Christ our saviour found it in their hearts.

How the city of Kulm was moved to its present site
Lines 8,618–31; III, 59

At the same time the noble, illustrious prince called ‘Landless’² came to Prussia with many knights and as well as many other good things he did to the benefit of the church, he moved the city of Kulm from Althaus to the slope where it stands today. This change proved to be the saving of the whole Kulmerland.

About various dealings with Swantopelk
Lines 8,632–709; III, 60

When Swantopelk heard that the master had arrived in the country he sent emissaries courteously asking him to send him Lord Heinrich von Liechtenstein. When that virtuous knight arrived, Swantopelk set out various serious complaints about how the Teutonic Brethren were supposed to have dealt unjustly with him. Finally he said: ‘I am ready to undertake binding agreements on anything which

¹ The original Christburg was built on the site of an old Pomesanian fortress (modern Stary Dzierzgoń, Poland). It was moved to its new location a few kilometres away (modern Dzierzgoń) a year later.

² Attempts to identify this individual have not arrived at any consensus. Strehlke, in SRP vol 1 (p. 402), suggests Heinrich, lord of Pleissenland, while Scholz and Wojtecki, in Peter von Dusburg, *Chronik des Preussenlandes*, p. 175 suggest Duke Albrecht von Sachsen on the basis of a variant reading in the Latin manuscripts.

is just, that the brothers in Prussia demand, and to do it unstintingly if they give me back my son, whom I gave them as a hostage.’ Lord Heinrich answered very courteously: ‘You must give up all hope that your son will be returned to you, because you have broken the peace for which he was given as guarantor not once, but many times. You have made common cause with the heathens and with them you have destroyed and laid waste the church in Prussia with inhuman ferocity, looted and burned and in your wickedness completely wiped out the faith which had been established by hard work and suffering. You have pitilessly beaten, imprisoned and slaughtered Christians and you have been responsible for sending women and girls into slavery among the heathens. I advise you to seek mercy, not justice.’ But because the wicked hate to hear the truth and be criticised, Swantopelk too, the fool, blocked his ears to the good knight’s censure. He behaved like a snake, a symbol of fools: it covers its ears when its master speaks to it so that it does not hear his words. Swantopelk did the same. However, he allowed Lord Heinrich to leave without trouble and return to Kulm, where he told the master how the discussion had gone and what had been said. Afterwards Swantopelk sent messengers and persuaded the master to meet him on an island on the Vistula. There they conducted wide-ranging negotiations, but in the end they left angrily and still enemies.

How Swantopelk breached the peace and devastated the land of Kujavia Lines 8,710–43; III, 61

Not long after this time his old hatred, inspired by the devil, made him forget all the kindnesses shown to him by the brothers in their mercy while he had been in great distress and very afraid. He repaid their kindness with evil, as wicked people everywhere do. He began to attack and kill the brothers’ people at many locations; but he did it all in secret. He killed this one, captured another and harassed them in many ways. Finally this rash fool let his evil arrogance be seen: he renounced the peace with the brothers and the Christians as a whole and began openly to feud with them and attack them as he had done in the past. He brought together a large army and marched into Lord Casimir’s land, known as Kujavia. The country was taken by surprise. He robbed and burned and created great panic. He killed many Christians and made many cripples. He took the children, girls and women off with him, along with great riches.

How Christburg was lost Lines 8,744–800; III, 62

The evil Swantopelk, this sink of iniquity, lacking all goodness, had not yet satiated himself with Christian blood, so he sinned against his creator. He exerted himself with all his might to enrage God on high. Spurning His commandments completely

he joined the side of the devil. He hated the Christians, and the brothers most of all because the spirit of God had recently given them the strength to capture a castle from the Pomerelians without a fight, as I described to you earlier. The accursed man planned to take a terrible revenge for this and sent for all the forces at his disposal. He contrived to have all the Prussians who had formerly been baptised assemble at his court with all their warriors and set off with him against the Christians. Because he was so treacherous he was able to use trickery to damage the Christians. He cunningly split his army into two sections. With one part of the army he himself went up to the front of the castle at the point where he thought the defence was weakest; the other part of his army attacked from behind. This gave the brothers a great deal of trouble and all those in the castle had their work cut out defending just one side. While they were engaged in defending the front the army at the back of the castle broke in without any resistance. They showed their furious hatred by going on a murderous rampage until they had killed all the brothers and all of their men.

How Christburg was rebuilt by the brothers **Lines 8,801–56; III, 63**

The master and the brothers were much saddened by the sorry news of the villain Swantopelk's murderous activities, because they grieved for those who had been killed. They also recognised as a result of this disaster that they would never be able to convert or subdue that apostate people or bring them to the faith unless they had a fortress in the midst of them, from which they could fight against them on a daily basis. Therefore they once more assembled a virtuous troop of the pilgrims who came regularly from German lands for the generous indulgences which had been promised to them from God in the preaching of the crusade, which was being preached in many places. When everything had been prepared which would be needed for building a new castle, the brothers and these guests advanced into Pomesania and changed the location of the castle of which I spoke earlier, but not its name, that is to say Christburg. Under this virtuous name they rebuilt the castle on its present site to the praise and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. They supplied the castle with everything required by way of foodstuffs, defences and many armed men. Not long afterwards the sweet lord Jesus helped the brothers to found a city next to the castle where Christians came to live and daily bravely put their lives and possessions at stake to protect the faith.

About the pious lives of the brothers at Christburg **Lines 8,857–914; III, 64**

During these years brothers lived in this house who led very pious lives, being wakeful, praying and fasting. They gave themselves little rest, which I interpret as

meaning: by the grace of God they held fast to their rule and the yoke of the order, while at the same time always being bold knights prepared for battle, so that to praise them you could truthfully say that they were good monks in the monastery and brave knights on the battlefield. Among them was a brother called Gleissberg, who was so saintly that we are told that one Easter Friday, at the beginning of the service celebrating our Lord's martyrdom, this brother stepped up and with intense piety fell to his knees in prayer in front of a cross which had been carved to represent Christ's death. When in his fervent devotion he made to kiss the red wounds on the image on the cross, gracious sweet Jesus gave a miraculous sign of how dear this knight was to Him: everyone saw the wooden image getting up and bending its arms to embrace the brother. However, that good man stepped back, because in his humility he thought himself unworthy. He said; 'O my dear Lord, I am very sinful and it is not fitting that you should approach me to embrace me.' There was also another brother there at the time, a heroic knight and devoted lover of God who wore a coarse iron chain next to his skin at night as a belt until the day he died.

**This is about how many Pomerelians and Prussians were killed
Lines 8,915–9,000; III, 65**

When Christburg had been rebuilt in its new location, as I read before, so new and so strong, the untrustworthy Swantopelk and the vicious Prussians were seriously concerned about it. They thought long and hard about a plan whereby they might recapture the castle, destroy it and burn it to the ground. Finally they agreed with Swantopelk that they would lay siege to Christburg with all their armies and would not leave until they subdued it and completely destroyed it. So the Prussians gathered together a mighty army and sent out many armed men in advance to protect the army's wagons on their journey. These wagons had been sent on ahead with weapons and supplies. The brothers at Christburg became aware of these men. They took courage from God and rode out against them and killed all of them on the battlefield. They drove the wagons back to the fortress at Christburg and shared out the booty. When this sad news was made known to the Prussian army they were incensed and all rode off home in a bad temper. At this time Swantopelk had gone to the fortress at Zantir with the biggest army at his disposal and had self-importantly pitched camp there. He sent out many knights and men and ordered them to find out whether Christburg was already under siege, as had been agreed. This plan had been made known to the brothers, so they took the enemy by surprise and killed many of them. The rest took flight like cowards back to the main army, making a lot of noise and shouting. This was heard by the main army and the cowardly noise dismayed it so that it too took fright and little by little started to run away. When the brothers saw this they began to pursue them and killed many of the Pomerelians. They also captured some of them. Many also drowned in the waters of the Vistula. However, Swantopelk and some of his

men escaped God's retribution by ship, but only a few of them. This campaign so weakened the evil man's armed forces that he did not embark on any more battles with the brothers.

About a battle in Natangia where 54 brothers and many other Christians were killed
Lines 9,001–156; III, 66

Since the time when the evil Swantopelk had turned the new Christians, the Prussians, away from the faith, used them for his own purposes and brought them into utter enmity with the brothers, as was his intention, all lines of communication, by water or on land, were so blocked by all sorts of traps that no-one was able to travel in or out of the region except under arms. The master selected some brothers and many armed men to join the brothers stationed at Balga and Elbing during these years and they began a campaign in Natangia, which they laid waste by fire and looting, killing many of the people. When they tried to leave they found all the routes blocked by large numbers of the enemy, who pressed them so hard that they retreated to a village called Krücken.¹ When the Prussians saw this, they besieged the brothers in the village, and they fought so that those in the village could not leave it and those outside could not go in. Finally the Prussian army surrounding the brothers became so large as others joined it that the onslaught forced them to enter into the following agreement: they left the marshal, Brother Heinrich Botel, as hostage, along with three other brothers. This was the Prussians' demand. If the others were taken prisoner their lives were to be spared. The only critic of this deal was Brother Johannes, the commander of Balga, and a valiant hero. He said, 'I earnestly advise that we should put our trust in God, who never abandons those who trust in him, and go out and fight the enemy. It is better to fight valiantly than to let ourselves be barricaded in here and killed.' The others argued against this. They agreed the plan I discussed before and sent hostages. When they had done this and given themselves up to the Prussians a mighty attack was launched on them. The Prussians broke the oaths they had sworn and furiously vented their rage on the Christians. They killed 54 brothers and all the Christians who had come on the campaign with them. This was in the year of our Lord 1249. After this grisly massacre had taken place at Krücken, one of the Natangians put the head of Brother Johannes, the commander I mentioned earlier, on a spear and lifted it up high, with these words: 'If your brothers had followed your good advice they would have escaped unhurt with great honour.' Among the Christians killed there one was martyred in this way: the Prussians tied his hands to a tree and cut out his navel, to which his intestines were attached, and fixed them to the tree. Then they beat him and chased him round and round the tree until all his intestines had been pulled out and were stuck fast to the tree. As a result of this criminal martyrdom,

¹ Near Kreuzburg, now Slavskoye, Kaliningrad Oblast.

with the help of his faith the virtuous brother gave up his spirit to God. You may turn every page of the writings on the martyrs from beginning to end, but you will not find there any saint who ever died in such a manner; even Tarquin the Proud,¹ who was the first to invent all the torments of martyrdom, did not think of such a form of martyrdom. This tells us that no saint before this ever suffered such torment in martyrdom. See how the Lord God gave up His people to the sword.² That evil people spilled their blood at will like water to flow across the land, and none of them could be buried in the safety of the earth; instead their flesh was left on the battlefield to be eaten by birds and wild animals. O sweet gracious God, turn away your anger; have pity, Lord, have pity on us. Take pity on the blood of your poor servants which has been spilled so terribly and let your anger pour down in vengeance on the people who have deserted you, who do not pray to you and hold your name in contempt. O sweet mighty God, for the honour of your name be gracious to your own and make the heathens so fearful that they never say mockingly to us, ‘Where is your God?’³

How this land was subdued again with the help of pilgrims
Lines 9,157–238; III, 67

This tremendous blow God had inflicted on the brothers and their people was soon known in Germany and both princes and lords were moved by the news and took pity on their suffering. So within a short time our dear Lord Christ, who wounds and heals His people,⁴ poured out a torrent of His mercy in the minds of these princes and moved them to seek revenge for the suffering which had taken place in Prussia, of which you have just heard me speak. The first was the powerful margrave of Brandenburg.⁵ He came to Prussia in the year of our Lord 1251. The bishop of Merseburg⁶ and Count Heinrich of Schwarzburg⁷ came the following year. Each of these brought many men and rode through the apostate lands of Prussia we named before, fighting the length and breadth of the country with their armies, first one and then the other. They did this repeatedly, taking prisoners, killing, plundering until they subdued the people in all parts of the land

¹ Tarquin the Proud (d. 496 BC), correctly known as Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, was the seventh king of Rome, reigning from 534 BC until the Roman Revolt in 509 BC. He was notorious for his cruelty and violence. The rape of Lucretia by his son, Sextus Tarquinius, led to the uprising which established the Roman Republic.

² Ps 78, 62.

³ Ps 79, 2–10.

⁴ Deut 32, 39.

⁵ Tentatively identified by Scholz and Wojtecki, in Peter von Dusburg, *Chronik des Preussenlandes*, p. 186 as Otto III (1220–66).

⁶ Heinrich von Warin.

⁷ Heinrich III, count of Schwarzburg (1220–59).

and compelled them to submit themselves to the brothers again and live according to their will. From this time the Pomesanians, Warmians, Barthians and Natangians completely gave up their insolence and fighting and submitted to the commands of the faith, as ordained by God, Christ our saviour, in whose divine hand is all power and the justice of all kingdoms. In this way they became subject to the brothers and sent hostages as guarantees. Praise be to God! During all this time Swantopelk had supported these people and had borne such costs in terms of effort and expense that his power was exhausted. So he was reconciled with the brothers by the good offices of an archdeacon from Liège, called Jacques, who afterwards became pope under the title of Urban IV. Swantopelk had no choice but to maintain this truce until his death.¹ That was the end of the wars he had waged against the brothers for eleven years and Prussia began to live in peace.

A digression

Lines 9,239–92; IV, 29–32

Now we will break off from our main theme for a while and this digression will inform you about what was happening in other lands at this time. In the year of our Lord 1243 Innocent IV occupied the papal throne in Rome; Frederick II wore the imperial crown, ruling with great skill. In the year of our Lord 1245 that same Innocent held a council at the town of Lyon where he agreed that the octaves of the festival of the birth of the pure, chaste Mother of God should be solemnly celebrated in perpetuity. At the same time the papal court canonised good St Edmund, the bishop of Canterbury, and Stanisław, bishop of Cracow, recklessly murdered by an evil prince, and the holy martyr of the Dominican Order, St Peter.² The blessed pope praised and canonised these three saintly men so that they are now regarded as holy by the church and their feast day is celebrated. In the year of our Lord 1246 the high-born landgrave of Thuringia was elected king of the Romans.³

¹ Jacques Pantaléon, Pope Urban IV 1261–64. Swantopelk capitulated in 1248 and the Treaty of Christburg was agreed on 7 February 1249. Under the terms of this treaty the Prussians were guaranteed their personal freedom as long as they had not participated in the uprising. Further outbreaks of fighting went on until 1253, justifying the text's claim that the wars lasted 11 years. See Scholz and Wojtecki, in Peter von Dusburg, *Chronik des Preussenlandes*, p. 187.

² The account conflates several different events. St Edmund was canonised in 1247. St Peter of Verona was assassinated at the instigation of Milanese Cathars in 1252 and canonised in 1253. Bishop Stanislaw was murdered in 1079 by the Polish King Boleslaw II the Bold and was also canonised in 1253. The Council of Lyon took place in 1245.

³ Heinrich Raspe (1204–47), was brother-in-law of St Elizabeth and brother of Grand Master Konrad of Thuringia, and was elected emperor in opposition to Konrad IV.

About Brother Konrad the fifth grand master
Lines 9,293–656; IV, 33

Brother Konrad, who had previously been landgrave of Thuringia, according to what I have read, was chosen to be the fifth grand master of the German House.¹ During his life on earth he was a great advocate for the order by the ordered piety of his life and his admirable efficiency. He died on 24 July (that is the eve of St James' Day) and is buried at Marburg, as his gravestone shows. While this warrior of God was still living according to the values of the secular world he captured a city called Fritzlar and he had behaved as is usual on such occasions. When he later decided to take up a clerical vocation, he was so distressed by much that he had done that he humbly did penance as follows. Bareheaded and barefoot he walked around the churchyard at the head of a procession and then he lay down at the door of the churchyard in that town and offered to allow himself to be beaten by the people there with a rod which he was carrying as recompense for the humiliation and the crimes he had inflicted on them. When no-one hit him he did not give up: he went from house to house through the town falling on his knees at every door. He pleaded with the occupants to come out and beat him as much as they wished for his sins. He shed many tears begging them to forgive him for the guilt he had incurred and that is what happened. Many people wept with him out of sympathy for the violent emotions called forth by his penitence. The prince went right through the city and was not beaten at all except by an old woman who struck him so hard on the body with the sharp rod that she drew blood, taking revenge for his sin. The lord suffered this patiently. There is a strange story about this same brother Konrad's initial auspicious decision to join the Teutonic Order. It happened like this. On one occasion the wise man we have been discussing withdrew from public life to his castle of Tenneburg to get some peace from some negotiations, taking two of his favourite men who were the same age as him, Hartmann von Heldrunen and Dietrich von Grüningen, with him to enjoy some recreation. In addition to these young men there were a small number of servants. When the landgrave was sitting enjoying himself with them and they were all trading insults, as happens when people get together, a young unmarried woman came up to them. When the lord saw her he asked her, 'Where do you come from, girl?' She answered him cleverly and very daringly: 'My lord, I have been sitting

¹ Konrad of Thuringia (1206–40) succeeded Hermann von Salza and was grand master from 1239 to 1240. He was a brother-in-law of St Elizabeth and was a member of the commission which oversaw her canonisation. He joined the order in 1234, apparently after a sudden conversion. He was the first major member of the nobility to join the order and became grand master without previously having held high office in the order. The two men mentioned here who joined the order with him, Hartman von Heldrunen and Dietrich von Grüningen, later became grand master and master of Livonia and Germany respectively. After his death, Marburg remained one of the order's main centres in Germany. See Hartmut Boockmann, 'Konrad von Thüringen', in Arnold (ed.), *Hochmeister*, pp. 17–21.

in the bushes all day trying to earn my living and I'm very cold and wet.'¹ When he heard this he said, 'You poor wretch, you are willing to suffer more misery to earn the torments of hell and eternal damnation than many other people do for the rewards of heaven.' She replied, 'Noble lord, consider this: I, poor wretch that I am, have no other way of feeding myself.' Then he said to her, 'Tell me, woman, would you want to live chastely if you were given enough to feed yourself?' She began to sigh pitifully and weep hot tears, and she said to that virtuous man, 'Yes, yes, of course I would.' So in God's name the pure, noble prince took pity on the poor woman's misery and provided her with an income large enough for her to be able to feed herself to the end of her life and prosper. After this the words the landgrave had spoken in criticism of the woman began to prick his conscience and he realised that they applied far more to him than to the woman to whom they were directed; because although her life had been unchaste he had been worse. He realised that the woman sinned because she was forced to by necessity and grinding poverty. He thought about her conviction that she would not sin if she had enough to eat: he on the other hand had sinned out of weakness and of his own free will and no reason other than enjoyment made him behave this way. He worried and wrestled with these thoughts all night, began to suffer pangs of remorse and got very little sleep. In the morning, at day break, Hartmann and Dietrich both said they were also struggling with similar thoughts which had kept them awake. On hearing that, the thought that he had been playing with earlier took deeper and deeper root in his heart and, barefoot and wearing coarse wool² next to their skin, he rushed with them to St Nicolas' chapel, which he knew was at Goldbach, and devoutly asked God for guidance in the matter. And see, immediately God planted the idea in his head that he should travel without delay to the pope with a few of his men and confess from the depths of his contrite heart all the sins he had committed since childhood, receive absolution for them and perform a fitting penance. The pope ordained that his penance was to put on the habit of the Teutonic Order and wear it to the end of his life. When he had done all this and was returning home, the duke of Austria offered this virtuous man his daughter as his wife, but he turned her down and rejected her because his saintly intentions were firm and could not be shaken. His rejection of the marriage was kept secret, but he told some of his closest associates and begged them in tears, in the name of God, to devote their lives with him to the Order of the German House. They agreed to do this for love of him and because he asked them, but even more for the love of God, and in His name they entered the order with him. While all this was happening one of his knights was feuding with him and had angrily gathered together a large army and attacked and plundered the borders of his land. When he was returning from this a messenger from his castle came out to meet him bringing sad news. He

¹ The implication from what follows is that the woman was a prostitute, plying her trade outside in the bushes. The fact that she approaches Konrad suggests he had been considering using her services himself, but he reconsiders and repents.

² That is, dressed as penitents.

said that his dear wife had died in childbirth and that the child was stillborn. According to the messenger these terrible disasters happened at the same time as he was ransacking and devastating that country. Troubled, he realised that God had punished him in this way because he had wrongly tried to divert his lord from the good plans to which he was committed and he was so repentant that he gave all the plunder back to those he had robbed and went off to find the landgrave and threw himself in front of him, pleading with him to graciously overlook his wrongdoing. The landgrave said, 'How dare you appear in front of me, guilty of such crimes?' 'Lord, your goodness, which I know well, encouraged me to hope that you will forgive me, because I have made up my mind that I shall devote my life with you to the service of God in the Teutonic Order.' When the landgrave heard these words he was so happy that he threw his arms round his neck in joy and willingly forgave all the crimes he had committed against him before. Afterwards, this warrior of God, that knight, Hartmann and Dietrich and many good knights and noblemen united in God, travelled together to Marburg and took the oath as members of the order. After they had put on the habit of the order, as was the custom, and stretched out in front of the altar renouncing all earthly desires, a virtuous priest read the order's blessing, reaching the part where with a pure voice he began to sing the hymn '*Veni sancte spiritus*', which means 'Come, Holy Spirit on high, fill the hearts of your loyal servants with the fire of your love and set them alight with it'. Then God gave a sign that He had chosen these noble heroes as His special servants, because when the priest started singing '*Veni*', suddenly the Holy Spirit came to them in the form of a flame which was clearly visible to all the onlookers and seemed to take possession of them. It also seemed that the more ardent they were in their love of God, the bigger the flame became above them. God filled the count, who later became grand master, with His radiance and possessed him with His spirit, so that he knew the secrets of people's minds, and for this reason he could not stand the presence of people guilty of licentiousness. An abbot heard this story and wanted to find out if what he had heard was true so he came to the master with two young men who he knew led a dissolute life. As soon as the grand master set eyes on his guests he told them solemnly that they must go. This made them want to repent and they went and confessed their sins. When they had done this, they went back to see the man of God. When he saw them he raised his eyes to heaven and said, 'Gracious God, dear lord Jesus Christ, I can see in these young men how merciful you are; before, they were the children of the devil, now they belong to God.'

Digression [continued]

Lines 9,657–728; IV, 34–6

In the year of our Lord 1249 the count, the king of the Romans, died and after him Count William of Holland was elected king, only to die shortly afterwards, killed by the Frisians. Both died before they could be crowned. In the year of

our Lord 1250 Henry the Strong, king of Denmark, was killed by his youngest brother,¹ in a repeat of the evil when Cain killed Abel in an attempt to gain control of the kingdom. But God soon passed judgement on him because he was killed by the Frisians in the following year's campaigns. Thus one murder avenged the other. The murder had been predicted during the king's lifetime by St Wenceslas, who appeared to him while he slept and who had also been killed by his own brother 300 years earlier when he was duke of Bohemia. During this apparition St Wenceslas asked the virtuous King Henry to establish a church in his kingdom and endow it richly in the saint's honour. The lord did as he was requested. In Reval in Livonia he founded a city in which he had built a Franciscan monastery in honour of St Wenceslas. In the year of our Lord 1251 Konrad, the son of Emperor Frederick II and the daughter of the king of Jerusalem, marched into Apulia and tore the walls of Naples down to their foundations. The following year he died as a result of poisoning. With that, let us put an end to this digression and take up the chronicle where we left off.

About the wars against the Sambians and how Germau was devastated
Lines 9,729–98; III, 68

It would be superfluous to describe all the various battles conducted against the Sambians; it would take too long. But nonetheless I would like to tell you about some of them. The brother known as Heinrich Stange, the commander of Christburg and a magnificent hero in battle, assembled a large troop of brothers and armed men on the orders of the master, marched out in battle against the Sambians in the name of the Lord and entered their territory across the sea at the point where there is now a castle called Lochstädt² (this was during the winter) and devastated the land far and wide, robbing, burning and killing with great ferocity as far as the village of Germau.³ The Sambians mounted their defence there and pressed them so hard that the brothers and their army turned and fled. When the commander saw this he set off against the enemy with the intention of holding them off for long enough that his men could escape unharmed. He fought like a lion, showing no fear and wounded many of them. Finally, however, the heathens surrounded him and beat him ferociously, keeping it up until they had knocked him from his horse. When his brother, Brother Hermann, saw this it caused him great distress to see his own flesh and blood being slaughtered in this way. He was seized by a great anger and he ran up and hit out at them valiantly, stabbing and slashing until many of the

¹ There was no King Henry of Denmark at this date. However, in 1250 King Erik IV Plovpenning of Denmark was killed by his brother Abel, duke of Schleswig.

² Lochstädt (modern Pavlovo, part of the city of Baltiysk, Kaliningrad Oblast) was situated on a spit of land to the north-east of the Vistula Lagoon. It became the base of the order's Amber master.

³ Modern Russkoye, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia.

heathens lay at his feet, some dead, others wounded. In this way he protected his brother and they both inflicted great distress on many a Sambian. Finally they lay dead together on the battlefield. In the meantime the other men retreated without any difficulty and reached home safely.

A miracle which happened to the same commander, Brother Heinrich Stange
Lines 9,799–832; III, 69

I heard of a truly wonderful miracle concerning this same Brother Heinrich Stange, of whom I spoke before. Once when he was kneeling in front of the altar at his devotions when he had finished his fervent prayers he asked God to give him a sign that he was in any way worthy of His grace. As soon as this true man had spoken this request a great miracle happened. There was a statue above the altar, carved in wood, depicting Christ's martyrdom, according to what I have read. The statue released its hand from the nail and blessed him with the sign of the cross. When the warrior had received this miraculous blessing he left satisfied. This miracle was witnessed and made public by a virtuous priest brother at Christburg by the name of Lord Heidenreich, who had been in the corner of the chapel where it was his habit to conduct his worship of God in private.

About predictions of victory against the Sambians
Lines 9,833–84; III, 70

When the brothers had built and garrisoned the castle of Balga on the shore of the Vistula Lagoon the heathen Sambians began to discuss how they might have an opportunity to find out about the brothers' lives. To this end, one of their elders was got ready and sent to Balga. When the brothers understood what he wanted they received him kindly and showed him all their activities in the chapel, and the refectory and the dormitory. When he had seen all of this he left, went back to his own people and reported his findings: 'You should know that the brothers are flesh and bone like us, and like us they have weapons, food and are similar in many ways; but they differ from us in one of their practices and it is this which will surely defeat us. It is their custom to get up during the night and go all together into their place of worship, which is in the castle. They also do this at several times during the day and fervently worship and praise their god. We do not do this. You should be aware that because of this they will be victorious in battle and we will be defeated.' This same Sambian had also seen the brothers eating cabbage, which was something the Prussians did not do at that time. For that reason he thought it was grass. 'I also saw them eating grass for nourishment, like horses,' he said. 'Who could stand up against men who can survive in the wilderness in this way and eat grass as food?'

How the Sambians were subdued **Lines 9,885–10,096; III, 71**

When the peoples I described to you earlier, the Pomesanians, Warmians, Pogesanians, Natangians and Barthians, were converted to the faith, there remained the lands of the Sambians which were still deprived of the true faith because they had not yet been conquered. Christ saw to it that 1254 years after He lived in human form, King Ottokar of Bohemia marched into Prussia.¹ He was skilled in warfare and laudably pious. Margrave Otto of Brandenburg came with him as his marshal on this campaign, a man of great courage, and also that bold, daring man, the prince of Austria and margrave of Moravia. These princes had many fighting men in their retinues. Bishops also arrived, very praiseworthy men: Bishop Heinrich of Kulm and a bishop of Warmia called Lord Anselm. Bishop Bruno of Olmütz² also arrived. By their preaching these three good bishops had persuaded many men to become pilgrims for the honour of God. Many bold warriors, counts, knights and their warriors arrived from the Rhineland, Saxony, Thuringia, Meissen and from many different lands. They all wanted to fight the heathens in God's name and avenge the suffering of our Lord who was crucified for us. When all the battalions were assembled into one army you could estimate there were about sixty thousand fighting men there. I do not know how many wagons of weaponry and supplies there were; I can only guess there must have been a lot of them. Finally the army arrived at its goal at Elbing, at the time when winter usually sets in, and the old enemy of man's salvation tried by his devilish cunning to undermine the state of affairs Christ in His wisdom had arranged for the blessing of mankind. This is how he began: he incited two men, one from Austria and the other a Saxon, according to what I have read, to become embroiled in a dispute in a mill about whose corn should be ground first. The noise of the quarrel eventually became so loud that it was heard by their lords, who also joined in. Not only the knights and common people but also the kings and other princes who were present put on their armour and prepared to fight each other. However, that virtuous man of God the bishop of Olmütz came among them and stopped the feuding and brought about a reconciliation. After this affair the king of Bohemia went to Balga without his men, where he found a Sambian called Gedune. This had been cleverly organised by the brothers. He was an old man and the father of Wissegaud of Medenau,³ one of the family now known as the Candeym. In his time he had been one of the best of them and knew all about the Sambian army. It had been arranged that the army would follow on afterwards; when he could see just a part of it, the king asked the man, 'Answer me this: could I achieve anything in Sambia with this army?'

¹ Ottokar II of Bohemia (1233–78) was margrave of Moravia from 1247, duke of Austria from 1251, king of Bohemia from 1253. The chronicle presents these incorrectly as separate persons.

² Bruno von Schaumburg. Olmütz is modern Olomouc, Czech Republic.

³ Modern Logvino, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia.

Gedune said, 'No, nothing.' Then twice as many of the army appeared, but still Gedune answered in the same way. The third time three times as many appeared, but he still answered the same way. Finally the whole army appeared, completely covering the shining surface of the ice. The question was repeated, with the king saying, 'What do you think now? Can I engage the Sambians and defeat them in battle?' 'Yes,' said Gedune, 'without a doubt. Your campaign will know no limits. You can march wherever you want and do what you wish with the army I have seen here.' After this the king gave him his banner and told him to plant it at the border of his and his friends' lands, so that the symbol would protect them from any harm from the Germans. But the Prussian was too slow, because he did not realise the Germans would come so fast, so he lost his advantage. He delayed too long and his delay caused him great grief. When he reached his home he found his own and his friends' houses burned to the ground. But what caused him the greatest grief was that his whole household had been slaughtered, along with his whole family including his brother Ringel, according to what I have been told. The king we mentioned before launched a surprise attack into Sambia, in the region of Medenau and killed many of the people there. He also took some prisoners and burned everything that flames could consume. He campaigned at full strength for the whole day and then spent the night there. On the following day he departed for the region of Rudau,¹ captured a castle there from the Sambians and persecuted and killed so many of the Sambia people that they offered hostages and begged the king graciously to accept them and not to wipe out their entire people in this terrible way. Afterwards he also marched through the regions of Quednau, Waldau, Kaimen and Tapiau.² To prevent him from perpetrating such slaughter there they brought him their sons as hostages; in addition they swore unreservedly that they would be subject to the friends of God, the brothers and that they would receive the faith and become Christians. After this the king handed the hostages over to the brothers and marched on to the hill where Königsberg now stands and advised the brothers to build a castle there for their own security and to protect the Christians. He also made a contribution to the building costs and gave them generous donations, as befitted his royal status. With this he came to the end of the duties of his pilgrimage and the noble, merciful king marched joyfully back to his kingdom.

About the building of the castle of Königsberg Lines 10,097–136; III, 72

After the king's departure they did not delay but started preparing the equipment and tools necessary for building. When everything was ready, a great army was

¹ Modern Melnikovo, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia.

² Modern Severnaya Gora, Nizove, Zarechye and Gvardeysk, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia.

assembled, including all the Prussians who were loyal to the brothers, and they built a strong fortress on the hill where the old castle can still be seen. They called the castle Königsberg¹ in honour of King Ottokar, who had first advised them to build it. It was known to the Prussians as Tvangste, after a nearby wood. The castle was built in the year of our Lord 1255. Brother Burchard von Hornhausen was installed as the commander of the castle. Brothers and many people were left there under his control. Afterwards the castle was built on the site to one side of the same hill where it can be seen today, with its two surrounding walls and nine towers.

How Sambia was devastated by the heathens and the castle at Wehlau was built

Lines 10,137–200; III, 73

In the same year as Königsberg was built, according to what I have read, the Nadrovians, Scalovians and Sudovians, those mad heathens, became furious that the Sambians had left them and entered into a Christian way of life and submitted to the brothers; that made them very fearful that they too would afterwards be subdued, and that is in fact what happened. They assembled their forces and campaigned ferociously in Sambia, robbing and burning buildings, killing and taking prisoners and when they had finished and were on the point of leaving they suddenly agreed the idea of building a castle at Wehlau² to use as a look-out post, and to make it so strong that the brothers could not travel past it at will with the Sambians and overrun Nadrovian lands without warning. When the castle was built Tirsko stayed there as its commander along with his son Mandel and many warriors. All of the remaining men went home. Now the miraculous will of God, which is wiser than all treachery and trickery, contrived that everything the Nadrovians had built for their defence became a trap and a noose for their own necks because God's goodness so filled and inspired Tirsko and the men with him with the fire of His grace that they rejected their monstrous gods and came over to the brothers and to the Christian faith and helped them silence and destroy by force of arms the arrogant heathens.

How Wohnsdorf was laid waste and a castle there captured

Lines 10, 201–226; III, 74

The lie of the land and all the roads in the neighbouring country were well known to Tirsko. The commander of Königsberg relied on his directions and having assembled an army of Sambians he set off on a campaign with them to the region

¹ Literally: 'King's Mount', modern Kaliningrad, Russia.

² Modern Znamensk, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia.

of Wohnsdorf,¹ which he took by surprise, and at once laid siege to the castle called Capostete with the ladders and equipment he had brought with him, and stormed it with his men, until he captured it. Inside the fortress he captured and killed heathens and then burned it to the ground. He did not leave the region until he had completely laid it waste, plundering, killing and burning. Only then did he leave.

How Wohnsdorf was subdued

Lines 10,227–58; III, 75

The year after these events the same commander Brother Burchard of Königsberg assembled a strong army and set off once more on a campaign in the territory of Wohnsdorf, where there was a castle called Ochtolite² which he captured and burned down. He marched through the land looting and taking prisoners, burning and slaughtering the enemies of Christendom. The garrisons of the three castles Gundow, Angetete and Unsatrapis saw this attack heading their way. They acknowledged that God fought on the side of the brothers and that their power had diminished to such an extent that they were no longer able to resist the Christians. They sent hostages and submitted humbly to the brothers and the Christian faith.

How part of Natangia was attacked

Lines 10, 259–78; III, 76

The commander assembled these new Christians from Wohnsdorf with all the other men he had available and marched with them to a region of Natangia where the people were not observing the obligations imposed by the peace treaty we told you about, and subdued it by burning and looting. He also killed Goducke, the leader in this region at the time, along with two of his sons and many other men. He carried off his wife and family along with other plunder.

Of the arrival of the margrave of Brandenburg

Lines 10,279–314; III, 77

In the same year, 1255, John, margrave of Brandenburg,³ a mighty lord in battle, came to Prussia with a great army of knights and fighting men all of them keen to fight in the name of God against the heathens, if it could be arranged. However, when they came, the winter was so mild that they were unable to get close enough

¹ Modern Kurortnoye, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia.

² Lithuanian Auktalytė, modern Progres, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia.

³ John I of Brandenburg, 1213–66.

to the enemy to inflict any damage on them; this is because the land in between is waterlogged and swampy and so difficult to cross that no army can travel there on horseback unless the winter is severe enough that it freezes hard enough to allow the army to cross. That good fortune was denied these lords and they and their men were disappointed that they were not able to fulfil their wish to fight. Nonetheless I confidently hope that their intention will have earned them God's wages. He and his troops had to return to their homeland without the satisfaction of a battle.

About Brother Gerhard, the master of Prussia
Lines 10,315–24; III, 78

Brother Gerhard von Hirschberg was the fourth master of Prussia and held office for two years.¹ He initiated many good things to the benefit of that land. Afterwards he returned to Germany and was made master of Germany. He died and was buried there.

Of the praiseworthy life of a brother in the convent at Königsberg
Lines 10,325–70; III, 79

In the course of time there was a brother in the convent at Königsberg called Hermann Sarrazin who had been born in Swabia. When he still belonged to the world he was so devoted to the Virgin Mary, God's beloved, His daughter, His mother and His bride that he never refused anything that was asked of him in her name, whatever it was; he granted any request that he was capable of fulfilling. At one time he happened to capture a knight during the course of a battle whom he intended to hold to ransom, so he kept him in chains and under guard so that he was sure to pay. Finally he set a goal, a large ransom and said, 'Now hear this. You must give me this amount of money or I will put you to death.' The knight was very distressed, because he did not have the amount demanded in the ransom. He was very afraid. Finally he was advised to plead with the knight in the name of the Virgin Mary that he should not set the ransom so high. As soon as he had made this plea the knight said, 'This prayer has done you much good; you are free of all ransom demands!'

¹ This figure does not appear to have been master of Prussia. He is documented as the first commander of the order in Bavaria, Franconia and Swabia. See Udo Arnold (ed.), *800 Jahre Deutscher Orden. Ausstellungskatalog des Germanischen Nationalmuseums in Zusammenarbeit mit der Internationalen Historischen Kommission zur Erforschung des Deutschen Ordens* (Gütersloh/Munich: Bertelsmann, 1990) p. 513.

About the same brother
Lines 10,371–414; III, 80

After this same Brother Hermann had been received into the Teutonic Order, but was not yet a brother in the order. He was riding to the ceremony where he would receive the habit and the blessing and on his way there he came across many knights practising their skills on a meadow: jousting, fighting with spears, duelling on horseback and engaged in tournaments. When he came close to them he saw one knight in the arena equipped with all his weapons and all the trappings of a knight, both man and horse fully caparisoned in chivalric regalia, in front of whom a herald was calling out whether anyone there was so bold and skilful that he would engage in a joust for a prize and in honour of his lady. When Sarrazin heard this he made his mind up. He put his trust in the tender maiden he had chosen and in whose service he had dedicated himself, I mean Mary of course. In the name of the pure Virgin he marched into the arena, confidently attacked the knight, unseated him with his lance at the first attempt and knocked him to the ground. He gave the arms and the horse to the poor and rode away.

About the same brother
Lines 10,415–50; III, 81

When this same brother had given up the vanities of the world and taken the oath of the order he completely avoided the conceits of the world and became very virtuous. For this reason it happened that the pure maid Mary secretly consoled him and often spoke to him. On one occasion she appeared to him with a sad expression on her face. He asked her what the cause of her sadness was. She answered him: ‘It distresses me that my dear sons, your brothers in the Teutonic Order, used to talk about me and my son and the lives of the saints at meal times. Now, when they assemble, their talk displeases me: they eat and drink and forget about us, and talk instead in profane language of the exploits of worldly princes and what they have done. They enjoy hearing these things and this is a sorrow to me.’

About Brother Hartmann, the master of Prussia
Lines 10,451–82; III, 82

The fifth master of Prussia was Brother Hartmann von Grünbach, who held office for five years.¹ His deeds matched his name, because he was a very hard man. He also had a nick-name: he was called ‘Watmal’ everywhere after a coarse piece of clothing he ordered the brothers to wear. He also had two of his brothers publicly

¹ In fact 1259–61.

burned to death at Elbing in front of the common people. They had succumbed to the treachery of the devil and had gone over to the Prussians when they had been rebelling after the war in Curonia, which will be described later. When the pope heard this he was so angry that he ordered Hartmann to demit office and imposed a year's severe penance on him, along with everyone who had advised him in this unwise affair.

**About the construction of a castle in Karšuva on St George's Mount
Lines 10,483–512; III, 83**

At the same time Brother Burchard of Hornhausen was sent from Prussia to Livonia and established as master of the brothers there.¹ Because he knew the lie of the land in both these countries and was well liked by everyone, this warrior of God arranged for brothers from both areas, Prussia and Livonia, to contribute equally in terms of expenditure and work and build the castle which can be seen on St George's Mount in Karšuva, as a defence against the fury of the heathens who were then causing the Christians great problems.² When the castle was finished they selected a number of brothers and armed men from each territory, all of whom were eager to fight, to garrison the castle. This took place in the year of our Lord 1259.

**About a battle in Curonia in which 150 brothers were killed
Lines 10,513–732; III, 84**

In the year of our Lord 1260 the brothers from Livonia and Prussia came together in two mighty armies with the aim of bringing provisions to the brothers on St George's Mount. When they were approaching the castle a messenger came, bringing bad news. He said 4,000 Lithuanians had just ferociously devastated a part of Curonia, burning and looting. Many Christians had died at their hands and they had driven off so many women and children and so much booty that no-one could estimate the full amount. When the brothers heard this news both armies rapidly began to prepare themselves to take revenge for the attack and release the poor Christians who were being driven off as captives. When they had begun, Brother Heinrich, the marshal, asked a man called Matto, who I have heard was a Pomesanian and Pippin's son, how they should go about attacking the heathen army. The man replied with this advice: 'I suggest that we dismount and send the horses so far away from us that no-one will have the chance to flee back to

¹ Master of Livonia from 1256 to 1260.

² German Karschauen, modern Karšova, Lithuania. The location of this castle is disputed, see William Urban, 'Locating the castle of St. George in Karšova (1259–1260)', *Lituanus. Lithuanian Quarterly Journal of Arts and Sciences*, 29/1 (1983): pp. 329–36.

them, and that we should fight on foot. Since the men do not have horses they will be forced to defend themselves and to stay in the battle; otherwise they would undoubtedly flee.’ The knights of Reval, who were in the service of the king of Denmark at this time, disagreed with this advice, along with many others. They were of the opinion that it was not possible to fight without horses because of the weight of the armour. Then the men of Curonia, who were also involved in the fight, stepped up and humbly and fervently pleaded that if it came about that God gave the Christian army the victory, their wives and children would be released. The brothers would gladly have granted this request but the common people from both countries disagreed and said they should maintain their established rights in this matter, as they had in many previous battles.¹ At this, the men from Curonia became so angry with the Christians that when the brothers’ army began fighting the Lithuanians they treacherously attacked the brothers from the rear, like an apostate people. So when the Lithuanians were fighting the Christians at the front, and they were attacking them in the rear so ferociously, the ordinary men gave up the defence and they all abandoned the brothers and fled. However, a few of the Prussian nobles showed their loyalty to the brothers by standing by them. One of these, I have heard, was a Sambian from Quednau called Sclodo, Nalub’s father. He called together all his men and friends who were there and spoke bravely to them: ‘You pious people, today you should think of the fine clothes the generous brothers have given you, and allow the true colours of your clothes to be dyed red today with the blood of your martyrdom. In this hour of need, think of the sweetness of the mead and other drinks which were given to you, and allow yourself to be poured the bitter drink of death today with them, for the sake of the gratitude which will be given to you in heaven, along with the treasure of eternal joy for avenging the faith.’ After this forthright admonition they were so determined that they valiantly and unhesitatingly joined the brothers in battle and fought like the dear warriors of old.² In their ferocity their swords silenced many a proud heathen. The battle was so fierce and so hard-fought that many on both sides were killed. This continued until the Christians were overcome, as God ordained. The heathens won and the brothers lost because the might of their army had been diminished by the desertion of the rank and file. Among those who were killed on the battle on St Margaret’s Day were Brother Burchard of Hornhausen, who was master of Livonia, and Brother Heinrich Botel, marshal of Prussia, along with 150 brothers and so many other Christians that I do not know the number. May God who counted them all recompense their deaths with eternal blessings. The battle took place on a field in Curonia at the edge of a river called the Durbe.³ May God

¹ This passage appears to refer to the established practice that captured prisoners would be kept as slaves by the victors, even if the captives were Christians, as in this case.

² Dusburg has ‘the Maccabees’.

³ Lake Durbe is 23 kilometres east of Liepāja in present-day Latvia. The defeat, which took place on 13 July 1260, triggered the second Prussian uprising, which lasted from 1260 to 1275. It coincided with a period when the Holy Land was under attack from

our dear Lord avenge this defeat! After the slaughter the enemy pursued the fleeing Christians, who were by this time in such a panic that three or four heathens could kill a hundred of them or more or chase them away like base cowards. Woe, see how the enemy was strengthened by so much plunder, weapons, and the horses which they took from God's heroes, so many thousands of whom lay slaughtered on the battlefield. In truth their arrogance knew no bounds. O Lord, destroy their power and demolish their pride so that they may truly see that you fight on our side, o Lord God. By the power of your virtue avenge the blood of your servants which has been brutally shed in such great quantities by the evil heathens.

About a prophecy of this battle
Lines 10,733–64; III, 85

When Brother Hermann Sarrazin was about to set off with his brothers on the campaign in Curonia where this battle took place, the Virgin Mary appeared to him in a vision and said gently to him: 'Dear friend, I invite you to my son's table, where you will rejoice with us in eternal blessedness.' So when he was ready to ride off he said these kind words to some brothers: 'My dear brothers, may God take care of you and bless you in all eternity. You will never see me alive again because I have been invited by the dear mother of God to leave here and share eternal joy. May God grant my dearest wish, that you and I meet again in the kingdom of heaven. Amen.'

Another prediction of the battle
Lines 10,765–86; III, 86

There was a woman hermit in a cell in Germany, a sister of Brother Konrad von Feuchtwangen who later became grand master of the Teutonic Order. This woman led a pure, holy life in her cell and so our Lord appeared to her and revealed the slaughter to her in all its details. In the vision she saw the brothers and their soldiers fighting against the heathen army and all the Christians being struck down and killed. She also saw the angels joyfully transporting the souls of the dead into the kingdom of heaven.

the Mamluk Sultan Baibars and resources were diverted away from Prussia to defend the crusader kingdoms there.

Yet another prophecy of the battle
Lines 10,787–880; III, 87

The same year a vision was seen by a farmer in Prussia. He was simple and good-natured, God-fearing and upright and straightforward in all things. God revealed to him a vision in which he saw in the heavens the brothers valiantly fighting against the Lithuanians. When he had been shown this he was amazed and called to his workers saying, ‘Can’t you see how manfully the Brothers of our Lady are fighting against the heathens? See how the Prussians and the Livonians abandon them and flee, look how the brothers are now standing alone with a few men, defending themselves on all sides because the enemy have surrounded them. What a terrible disaster. I can see the brothers and their followers being killed. Now I can see Mary, who bore Jesus Christ, and crowds of angels and virgins leading their souls joyfully to the kingdom of heaven.’ The hermit and the man I have just described both saw the souls being taken up to heaven. The souls of two brothers were purer and more virtuous than the others. These were the souls of the two pure brothers who appeared to them: one was Hermann Sarrazin, the other was Gleissberg. You have heard before now how God used him to perform a great miracle at the convent at Christburg. The hermit in her cell and the pure farmer both agreed that they had seen all the souls being saved and arriving in heaven, except one who died. God knows the reasons for it being cast into hell, but I do not. This story teaches us beyond any doubt that Christ, our good Lord, who never does anything without good reason, allowed this plague of apostasy and many more which happened before and after this among His people. We should take note that those who died at this time received the reward of heaven for their toils and those who survived and were in danger became more and more strongly attached to their faith and silenced the unbelievers in battle; because the strength of faith is often endangered when it is safe, and it is more secure when it is in danger. This can also be observed in other good works.

How Lenzenburg was burned down along with many Prussians
Lines 10,881–976; III, 88–9

At that time the brothers were afraid that the Prussians wanted to abandon their faith and attack the Christians. While they were suspected of harbouring these evil intentions Brother Volrad Mirabilis was the advocate of Natangia and Warmia. He had this name because it suited him: he performed many miracles. One evening during this period, the advocate was about to have his evening drink, as was his habit. On this occasion he had invited the greatest men of the country to the castle at Lenzenburg.¹ While they were sitting talking pleasantly one of them arranged to

¹ Lenzenburg was situated near the mouth of the River Pregel on the Vistula Lagoon.

have the lights extinguished and attacked the advocate ferociously, stabbing and slashing at him. He would have killed him if he had not been wearing armour under his clothes. Immediately afterwards when the lights had been re-lit the advocate showed how his clothes had been slashed and torn to pieces and asked his guests to say what punishment the perpetrator of such a murder attempt should suffer. They all replied that such guilt required the criminal to be burned. Afterwards Brother Volrad invited more than ever before to the castle and looked after them very hospitably. Once they had had too much to drink they began to whisper about killing him. When he heard this he made up his mind to leave and bolt the door; then he started a fire and burned all his guests along with the castle and that was how the party ended. During the same year, when the Prussians saw the damage the brothers had suffered during the wars against the Curonia about which we have already spoken, and that they were severely weakened because of the many brothers, fighting men, horses and weapons they had lost in battle, along with many other goods necessary for warfare, they demonstrated their innate evil to the Christians once again. On the eve of the feast of St Matthew they fell back into their old sinful ways to glorify the devil like mad dogs and attacked the faith, fighting against the brothers.¹ The Sambians chose a leader called Glande, those from Warmia chose Glappo, the Pogesanians chose Auttume to be their war-leader, and the Natangians chose Henry Monte while the Barthians chose the one called Diwan to be their leader.

How much Christian blood was spilled
Lines 10,977–11,042; III, 90

Each of these leaders met with their men and they agreed that they would meet, ready for battle, on an agreed day, and that they would destroy and brutally kill anyone who called themselves a Christian and acknowledged their faith. Sadly, that was what happened. They campaigned ferociously the length and breadth of the country, killing all the Christians they found outside the fortresses. Some they bound and took off into life-long slavery. In their frenzied hatred they also desecrated and burned down churches and chapels, consecrated or not. They despoiled the holy sacraments in the churches, which symbolised the benefits of their salvation, by which I mean Christ's body and the holy oil. They handled these sacred things with their bare hands and trampled them on the ground most shamefully. What is more they desecrated and mistreated the communion robes, the vessels and the other artefacts which had been consecrated to God. They inflicted all manner of terrible forms of martyrdom on the priests and those heroes consecrated and chosen by God for his service. During this time, in their contemptuous treachery the Sambians took a priest brother of the German House who had been sent to baptise them and free them from their sins and treated him

¹ 20 September 1260.

shamefully, pressing his neck between two pieces of wood until he suffocated. They mockingly interpreted this death as being apt, saying, 'This form of death is suitable for holy people because we do not dare spill their consecrated blood.' Avenge this torment, good Lord!

**About the battle at Pokarwen, where many Christians were killed
Lines 11,043–212; III, 91**

In the year of our Lord 1261 news of these inhuman crimes was heard in Germany and the Christians, including princes, counts and many lords, felt very bitter towards the Prussians. They were distressed and moved to pity that the new plantation of faith, which had been established with such great effort and was flourishing in the blood so many Christians had shed there, should be so pitilessly destroyed, as the devil intended. This angered them and made them want to avenge the injustices and crimes in an act of Christian vengeance. One virtuous man was called von Reider. He came to the assistance of Prussia with many noble warriors from all over Germany. With them, the brothers marched into Natangia, plundering and burning, killing and taking prisoners. When they had done enough they returned to the place where Brandenburg now stands and pitched camp on a plain. Both groups, brothers and pilgrims, thought it would be worthwhile for part of the army to return to Natangia and other places and campaign there, devastating, destroying and burning whatever remained unharmed while the rest of the army waited for their return. While they were engaged in this the Natangians had assembled a mighty force and had come to Pokarwen,¹ where one part of the Christian army was, and attacked it ferociously. The brothers and the Christians fought back valiantly, particularly one, a good pure knight called Lord Schenckel² of Bentheim who came from Westphalia. He had heard a bishop there preaching to the people that all of the Christian souls who were killed by the heathens in Prussia entered heaven directly without going through purgatory. This reward was precious above all others to this knight. He spurred on his horse and charged, carrying his spear as knights do, and charged through the enemy front line and into the main army. His charge inflicted serious injury on many Prussians; his sharp-edged salute killed many on both sides.³ When he had charged through them, and he was turning back and had reached the middle of the army, this laudable warrior of God was knocked down. Then the Barthians on both sides attacked ferociously and many were seriously wounded or killed outright. The fighting went on until at last, unfortunately, Lord Reider himself was killed, and with him a large part

¹ The site of Brandenburg and Pokarwen is modern Ushakovo, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia.

² Identified by Scholz and Wojtecki, in Peter von Dusburg, *Chronik des Preussenlandes*, p. 213, as Stenckel of Bentheim.

³ I Maccabees 6, 45.

of the army and all the brothers who were with him. Some Christians were taken prisoner, the rest fled. At this point the troops which had been sent to Natangia returned. When they approached the battlefield and saw that the Christian army had conceded defeat and that there was nothing they could do to help because the enemy outnumbered them, they were forced to leave by secret tracks, bitterly distressed. When the slaughter was over the Natangians wanted to make a sacrifice to their gods and drew lots among the Christians they had taken prisoner. According to what I have heard the lot fell to a citizen of Magdeburg, known as a noble and wealthy man; his name was Hirtzhals. He took fright and begged Henry Monte to remember all of the many good things he had done for him in Magdeburg and to help him out of this present danger. On hearing this they drew lots once more, and Henry saved him again because it fell to him again. On the third occasion he was chosen again. By then he no longer wanted to delay but gave himself up willingly as a sacrifice to Christ the true God and as a witness to His true faith. They tied him to his horse and burned him on it as was the custom when they sacrificed to their gods. Here we should note a particular miracle which God performed for this citizen, as witnessed by this Henry and many other Prussians who were with him. They were heard to swear that they had seen a dove, whiter than the snow, flying out of the citizen's mouth at the moment at which he surrendered his soul in the torment of the fire.

About prophecies of the battle
Lines 11,213–50; III, 92

In Germany there was a woman who had so completely devoted her life to God that she led a saintly existence in a hermit's cell. She heard a great deal of noise and a lot of shouting outside her cell because a big crowd of devils was travelling past it. She asked them to tell her plainly where they were going. They answered, 'To Prussia; tomorrow there will be a fierce battle there and many dead on both sides; we intend to go there to wait for our share.' She said to them, 'When you pass this way again on your way back, tell me how the battle went.' When they came back to the same woman's cell they told her that the Christians had been defeated and that all their souls had left their bodies and been released from all distress and were being kept in eternal bliss, with three exceptions whose reasons for fighting had been impure: they had not come for the good of their souls, instead their minds were set on worldly renown and vanity.

How many pilgrims came to be killed
Lines 11,251–68; III, 93

In the same year I have read that the count of Barby¹ came here to Prussia to fight for God; many knights came with him and he rode with them into Sambia. Because he was burning and looting there the Sambian army assembled and attacked him on St Agnes' Day. The count was seriously wounded; some of the others were taken prisoner and some were killed, while some fled and escaped.

How the castle at Heilsberg was destroyed
Lines 11,269–96; III, 94

Not long afterwards the Prussians, goaded on by the devil's resentment, assembled in three armies and armed themselves with three trebuchets. They marched on the castle at Heilsberg, assembled the engines and arrogantly attacked and besieged the castle until the Christians who formed the garrison were forced by the pangs of hunger to eat 250 horses. Finally, to survive, these same people were forced to eat the horses' skins. In the end, when their food supplies finally ran out, they abandoned the castle and left in secret for the town of Elbing. They had taken with them twelve Prussians who had been sent to them as hostages; they blinded them and sent them back to their friends.

How Königsberg, Kreuzburg and Bartenstein were besieged
Lines 11,297–342; III, 95

Now the devilish people perceived they could do as they pleased and whatever evil ploy they initiated to damage the Christians always went according to plan. In their arrogance they asked, 'How long will this last? Well, we will wipe out and destroy everything that calls itself Christian in this land so that no-one remembers them or speaks their name.'² In their wickedness they assembled in a powerful fighting force and besieged the three castles Bartenstein, Kreuzburg and Königsberg, building powerful siege engines there. Round each castle they built three heavily armed siege towers and manned them with strong teams of fierce warriors, so that those who were besieged could not venture anywhere because of the forces surrounding them. No-one can fully comprehend or imagine the attacks and the danger, the suffering and the serious hardship the brothers and the Christians who were besieged with them at this time had to suffer. Starvation brought them to the point that they ate the sheep, cows, pigs and all the horses they had in the fortresses; they even had to eat the animals' skins because they were so hungry.

¹ Walther IV von Barby, 1223–63.

² Psalms 83, 4.

Many brothers and others lost all their teeth eating this tough, unaccustomed diet and chewing the skins.

About Brother Helmerich the sixth master of Prussia

Lines 11,343–54; III, 96

According to what I have read Brother Helmerich was the sixth master in Prussia.¹ He fulfilled this role vigorously for three years until he died and was buried at Kulm, where his body still lies. At this time Brother Dietrich was marshal in Prussia, a man who was bold in battle and devoted to God.

How the castle of Rössel was destroyed

Lines 11,355–68; III, 97

When the brothers at the castle of Rössel heard the news that the three castles mentioned earlier were being besieged, they became very concerned and extremely afraid and after much discussion of what would be best, they finally decided to burn down the castle and abandon it and they left secretly through the wilderness.

About a victory in which the counts of Jülich and of the Mark killed 3,000 Sambians

Lines 11,369–532; III, 98

Because the brothers and the Christians in Prussia had suffered so much and experienced such hardship and such bitter distress, as I have described, their strength was gone and they had nearly given up. One and all, old and young, they began to complain bitterly and give vent to their misery; they lamented and wept in their distress until they had used up all their tears. None of them was able to comfort the other because they were very afraid that God was so angry with them that he had turned away from them. They had fought many battles over the course of two years without a single victory in spite of all their efforts, and the enemy had had all the good fortune. This distress forced painful repentance on them. In sincere humility and with tears burning their cheeks they turned their eyes towards heaven and prayed fervently to God for help. It happened; their prayers were heard. Gracious God persuaded two praiseworthy counts, of the Mark and of Jülich² to come to Prussia with a great army of their fighting men. These guests arrived at Königsberg in the year of our Lord 1262 around the time of vespers on the eve

¹ Helmerich von Würzburg, master in Prussia from 1262 to 1263.

² According to Scholz and Wojtecki, in Peter von Dusburg, *Chronik des Preussenlandes*, p. 219, these were Count Wilhelm IV of Jülich and Engelbert I of the Mark.

of St Vincent's Day¹ and would have attacked the siege towers with which the fortress was besieged by the heathens that very day. However, the brothers advised against it, because there was too little daylight left for such a hard battle. The next day, at dawn, when the Christian army arrived intending to attack the siege towers all the Sambians had gone and they did not find a single man there. Instead they had set ambushes on the roads for the pilgrims. The count of Jülich was angered by the fact that the Sambians had escaped him. He did not know about the ambushes. He took all the men who had come with him and withdrew angrily, unaware of the danger from the hidden traps. However, the brothers loyally advised him to be careful and sent out scouts to look for tracks and find out whether there was any risk of danger on the road. One of these scouts, as I have read, was called Stanteko. He came across the Sambian look-outs, who attacked him and severely injured him. However his horse rescued him by carrying him quickly away, so that the heathens could not kill him. He rode up with a bloody sword and told them what the situation was. The guests were not slow in organising themselves for a battle. The count of the Mark and his men fought those who arrived on horseback while the others attacked the foot soldiers. They greeted them as enemies. Both sides were driven together by their rage. Like fearless lions the pure, high-born counts drenched their swords in the blood of many Prussians. With valiant courage they fought until God in his grace gave them a laudable victory without any loss to themselves. Many of the enemy were dead; some escaped by fleeing but were wounded. Many of them retreated to a village nearby which was known as Calgen and is now called Sclunie.² There were many hard-fought encounters before they were cleared out of there. They defended themselves vigorously against the pilgrims and gave them so much trouble that the brothers from Königsberg and their troops had to join in. They pitched cunning against cunning in their valiant fight against the enemy. The fighting lasted so long and was so hard that there were many dead and wounded on both sides; however, God entered on the side of his own pure pilgrims with the result that they killed all the Sambians, who were estimated to number well over 3,000. I have also read that many other Prussians lay dead on the same battlefield. Thanks be to God! He does not abandon His own in the long run, but comforts them when the time is right, as this battle proves to us, because this same day was the anniversary of the battle at Pokarwen, where the wicked apostates were victorious, as I described before. In this battle they were all killed.

¹ 21 January 1262.

² This location can no longer be accurately identified.

About predictions of the victory
Lines 11,533–64; III, 99

The brothers heard about this slaughter of the Sambians from an old Prussian. He said, ‘Let it be known that the Sambians will be killed on St Vincent’s Day, and if this is not so, you may strike off my head.’ I do not know what kind of spirit gave him such certain forewarning of these events. However, when the troops of guests left Königsberg without any fighting on the day the old man had singled out as the day of the unbaptised Sambians’ death, he was publicly called a liar. But he maintained what he had said before and said: ‘The Sambians will be killed today or you will see an abyss opening in the earth and swallowing up all the people like Dathan and Abiram.’¹ What more can I say? It happened on that day as the Prussian had predicted.

About the loyal Sambians who joined the brothers
Lines 11,565–84; III, 100

This persecution did not bring the Sambians to their senses or persuade them to return to the faith and the bosom of Christianity; instead in their wickedness they were persuaded to rebel even more against God’s discipline, campaigning viciously against the brothers, with the exception of a few men from the noblest families, who abandoned their homes and their inheritance and came to the brothers with their wives, children and all their followers. They have proved themselves to be loyal to the brothers since that time.

About the brothers’ battles against the Sambians, and firstly against the area of Quednau
Lines 11,585–636; III, 101

Nalubo, son of Sclodo, came from Quednau, according to what I have read. He was a terrible man and so arrogant that he thought it would be a scandal to submit so quickly to the brothers, so he did not want to follow the example of his friends who were turning to the brothers. This in turn set the brothers against him and they quickly prepared a campaign against him. When they were about to set off his brother, Wargullo, naturally began to lament the campaign in which his brother would die as a result of his senseless aggression. So he gained the permission of the brothers to go and advise him to change his mind. He spoke freely and passionately to him: ‘Go away, Nalubo, and flee to the forests to avoid death. Now you must be a refugee, because you were not wise enough to follow my advice or the advice of your friends. The brothers are so enraged against you that you have

¹ Numbers 16, 32.

no hope of surviving. If you want to live you must flee from here because they are already on your trail!’ He set off hurriedly and escaped alone by fleeing to the Schaaken¹ region. All the rest, his household and belongings, they took away as plunder and shared among themselves. After many attacks Nalubo finally decided to submit to the brothers. He gained much praise as a Christian and won a very laudable reputation across the whole region.

About the difficulty of supplying Königsberg
Lines 11,637–86; III, 102

In their wickedness the Prussians were set in their opposition to Christianity so they gave some thought as to how they might destroy Königsberg, that work chosen by God, so that the praise of God might not flourish in that place. But God’s wisdom thwarted their evil plans and treachery, however they tried to destroy the fortress. They had to acknowledge that they could not win it by force. So they put their minds to how they might destroy it and wipe it out by trickery. They had many ships built with which they intended to attack the ships which were sent to Königsberg laden with food from the Kulmerland and Elbing, with the intention of making the brothers so short of food that they died of hunger. The commander and all the brothers there were distressed by this evil turn of events. Eventually they agreed that they would secretly send out a man to drill through the hulls of the ships and sink them. He did this so often to discourage them that finally the trouble, work and expense became too much for them and they had to give up attacking the brothers’ ships. They had plundered and destroyed many of them, killing whatever crew members they found in them.

About the destruction of the bridge the Prussians had built on the River Pregel
Lines 11,687–76; III, 103

Since the Prussians were unable to destroy the castle they met again for a council of war and considered many suggestions and convoluted tricks whereby they might achieve the evil plan they had embarked on. After due consideration they finally agreed that they should build a bridge across the Pregel² to threaten the castle, and build a tower at either end of the bridge so that access was blocked for ships sailing up the river towards the castle at Königsberg, with the result that the brothers nearly died from hunger. When they realised the danger they were in they thought it better to die in battle than from hunger.³ So they put on their weapons

¹ Now Nekrasovo, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia.

² Modern Pregel or Pregolya river.

³ 1 Maccabees 3, 59.

and boarded their ships. When they came to the vicinity of the bridge they lowered their anchors while they were still moving fast, but at the same time a strong wind sprang up, driving them up to the bridge. This was brought about by God's providence. Now there was no point in hesitating; the brothers came together on the bridge, where they encountered many Prussians who were prepared for battle and well equipped with weapons. They fought them in God's name. On the towers above their heads were more Prussians, who caused them a great deal of trouble. There followed such a fierce battle between them as has only been fought by a very few before or since. When the battle had gone on long enough, God sent His own men heavenly help, as a sign, because it was impossible that they could be victorious by human strength alone over so many of the enemy. God simply filled them with the power to kill the enemy and destroy the bridge and towers, so that not a single piece of it remained in the place it had been built. It happened that during the battle Brother Gebhard, a Saxon by birth, chased after fleeing Prussians and in the pursuit he struck one of the Prussians such a blow that his head fell off. He left his head lying and ran after the others with just the stump of his neck. Finally he dropped dead of his injury. Each and every one of them thought that this terrible run was a great wonder, but it was a catastrophe for the runner and for the Prussians it was a great disgrace.

How Königsberg was attacked **Lines 11,777–816; III, 104**

According to what I have read, shortly after this Henry Monte, the chief of the Natangians, gathered together a strong and mighty army with the evil intention of storming and capturing the castle at Königsberg. When he rode up to the plain in front of Königsberg the brothers began to counter his attack. They advanced towards him on to the plain with their army. Henry Monte looked across and quickly realised that one brother, called Heinrich Ullenbusch, according to what I have read, who was carrying a crossbow, was just about to draw back the bolt. He hurried up to the brother, and when he was close to him he said mockingly to him: 'Today I will send you to heaven.' With these words he speared him with his lance and seriously injured him. Ullenbusch afterwards recovered from this life-threatening wound. The servant who was standing beside him at this time saw all this and took revenge for his lord. He carried a very short sharp javelin which he threw at Henry Monte. Monte was very seriously wounded and left quickly along with all his men to go back to his lands.

How the Prussians attacked Königsberg again and about a miraculous event involving a crossbow
Lines 11,817–52; III, 105

No-one can tell the whole story of how the Sambians and other Prussians tried to destroy the castle at Königsberg openly or by treachery. This caused the death of many men on both sides. It happened that on one occasion the Sambian army was approaching and were so threatening in their attack on the castle that the brothers were unable to make a stand in front of the gates and had to retreat. This retreat was so rushed that one brother left his loaded crossbow lying and fled. A Sambian picked it up and in his stupidity hung it round his neck in amazement. Some of the others racked their brains as to what it might be for and began to pull it about. Finally one of them found the right place; he pressed the trigger with his hand and shot him in the neck, killing him stone dead. The Sambian army was very frightened and feared the crossbow even more.¹

How the settlement at Königsberg on St Nicholas Hill was destroyed
Lines 11,853–68; III, 106

The brothers had established a small settlement next to the convent at Königsberg where St Nicholas chapel still stands. Because its defences were weak the Sambians were able to enter it secretly and kill or capture everyone who was there. No-one survived except by running away. As a result of this the town was moved into the valley between the castle and the Pregel; it still stands there, more secure than when it was on the hill. May God, who has always protected it, continue to protect in the future!

How the village of Drebnau was destroyed and many Sambians killed
Lines 11,869–920; III, 107

No-one can describe it all, and if someone were to describe it, it would be scarcely credible how steadfast and hard-working the brothers were in their constant battles against the Sambians to make them accept Christianity and to subject them to their rule, as they had done before. They pushed forward and weakened and subdued

¹ The crossbow, along with heavy armour and horses, represented the crusaders' greatest advantage in the fight against the Prussians. The use of the crossbow had been prohibited in battles among Christians from 1139 but was permitted against pagans and was widely used in Prussia. See Sven Eckdahl, 'Horses and Crossbows: Two Important Warfare Advantages of the Teutonic Order in Prussia', in Helen Nicholson (ed.), *The Military Orders*. Volume 2. *Welfare and Warfare* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).

the peoples living in the regions of Wargen,¹ Quednau, Schaaken and Waldau and others nearby, and then their army set off on a campaign in the region of Pobethen and destroyed the village of Drebnau,² burning, taking prisoners and putting many people to the sword. Then they returned with a great deal of booty. The people from these regions came together in a huge army and came after the brothers. They were keen to fight: they attacked the brothers so violently that they would have abandoned their plunder and been so defenceless that they were forced to flee. However, one very doughty man, Brother Heinrich Ullenburg, did not give up defending himself valiantly. He on his own caused such difficulties for the Prussian army that his comrades recovered their nerve, returned and fought the enemy with great ferocity, killing a large number of Sambians and leaving them dead on the battlefield. Afterwards they cheerfully drove off their original plunder and even more besides.

**How the brothers defeated the Sambians in the region of Bethen
Lines 11,921–80; III, 108**

There is an area in Sambia, called Bethen, where many warlike people lived. They were very powerful; it was estimated that one village could supply 500 valiant, able-bodied men for a battle. For this reason the brothers never dared to attack them or fight them with their own resources alone. So they agreed to send messengers to Livonia asking the master to promise help against the people of Bethen and send it to a place and at a time decided by them. The brothers left Königsberg for battle with all the might of their assembled forces, and arrived, as had been arranged, on the day and at the place mentioned before, and although the Livonians had not yet appeared, began fiercely to lay waste to that area, burning and plundering. The Sambians were united in their fury and assembled to fight the brothers' army. These were just on the point of abandoning their defence and taking flight because they were being overwhelmed by the enemy when the Livonian army arrived with powerful chargers and attacked the enemy as the brothers had planned. They were overjoyed to see them and together they cut down the enemy like grass, until none of those taking part in the battle survived. They took all the women and children there prisoner and burned down all the buildings, old and new alike, there and in the neighbouring districts.

¹ Modern Kotelnikovo, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia.

² Modern Romanovo, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia.

How the Sambians submitted to the brothers again
Lines 11,981–92; III, 109

After the Sambians had been severely chastised by many punishments and admonished by God through the agency of the brothers until they were no longer able to defend themselves, defeated, they were compelled to submit themselves once more to the faith, and to demonstrate that they intended to remain true to it in the future they gave hostages.

How the Sambians rebelled once more in the area of Rinau
Lines 11,993–12,038; III, 110

The devil, who is jealous of peace and blessedness, could not allow this to continue and evilly goaded the Sambian people who lived in the district of Rinau into returning to the path of unbelief where they had been before and to rebel. It happened like this: they gathered an army and set off to attack and storm the castle of Fischhausen,¹ the seat of the bishop of Sambia. There were only two men there, if I have heard correctly, just a brother and his servant who guarded and defended the castle against attackers. But the good Lord Himself was a watchman there looking out for its enemies and protecting the castle as a sign of His grace; because when the enemy came to the castle gate the strap for opening the gate was hanging in full view. Yet God blinded them so that none of them noticed it or was aware of it. They could have opened the castle and it would have been lost if they had seen the strap which was attached to the latch – all it would have taken was the strength of one finger – if God Himself had not averted disaster and made them blind. They attacked the castle afterwards for a while without any success and then moved away.

How the district of Rinau was destroyed and all those who lived there were killed
Lines 12,039–54; III, 111

When the brothers at Königsberg heard of this wickedness of the Prussians they were very angry and gathered their army and all the loyal Sambians they knew of. With this force they went to attack the district in the area of Rinau and killed all the men there. They drove off the women, children and possessions. In this way they restored peace again to Sambia.

¹ Modern Primorsk, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia.

About the building of Tapiau and Lochstädt
Lines 12,055–76; III, 112

At the same time as the Sambian people were rebelling for the second time, as I have described, the brothers built two castles from which they hoped the better to subdue the Sambians' and diminish the threat of attack. One of them was called Tapiau, situated on the Pregel river. The Prussians called it Surgurbi in their language. The second one was built down on the Vistula Lagoon close to the sea: it was previously called Witlandsort and is now called Lochstädt. A Sambian called Loucstiete lived at this place and the castle is named after him.¹

How Girdau was destroyed
Lines 12,077–112; III, 113

A good Christian Prussian called Girdau lived in Barthia at this same time, according to what I have read. He was well respected, wealthy and from a good family. Many of his relatives are still alive and are now called Rendalia. At this time he was in possession of a castle which was called Girdau, after him. Because he had abandoned his godless ways, obeyed God's commandments and loved Christianity, he was subject to the anger and violent attacks of his neighbours when the devil, who hates all goodness, goaded them to abandon the faith. He was hard pressed by these attacks and finally he was so short of food that he could not hold out any longer. He burned down the castle and left the area with his wife and children, his possessions and his men and went to Königsberg to join the brothers.

How six brothers and many Christians were killed and the castle at Waistotepila was burned down
Lines 12,113–64; III, 115

There was castle in Barthia built on a river called the Guber. The fortress was called Waistotepila and it is documented that it then belonged to the brothers. One day the Prussians came and raided two villages nearby. The brothers and their men gave chase. They rushed after the army, angry and out for revenge. The Prussians ambushed them from a hide-out and killed six brothers and many Christians; the exact number is not recorded. Gracious God, you know their names and how many there were; receive them into the joy of heaven through your holy martyrdom! But the Prussians had not finished inflicting misery on the brothers. They assembled a large and powerful army and marched up to the castle of Waistotepila and besieged it, attacking it ferociously with all the power at their disposal for a whole day, from

¹ Modern Gvardeysk and Pavlovo respectively, Kaliningrad Oblast.

morning to nightfall. However, the brothers put up such a powerful defence that they left and headed for home. After this attack the brothers established that the castle was so unsafe that they were incapable of withstanding another such attack without incurring great losses so they secretly abandoned it, having first reduced it to ashes.

**About Wiesenburg and how 20 brothers and all their army were killed
Lines 12,165–226; III, 116**

Wiesenburg was the name of another castle the brothers had in Barthia on the bank of the river still known as the Guber. This castle was called Walewona by the Prussians. The Sudovian army marched on it in force, augmented by many people from the surrounding areas, and together they cruelly set fire to and devastated the whole area around the castle. There was a traitor among the brothers' followers who, as the enemy was leaving, urgently advised the brothers to pursue them. This heathen advice convinced the brothers to set off in hot pursuit with their own army. When they could no longer follow the Prussians' tracks they began to return home, but the traitor stopped them, saying they should put aside their misgivings and keep going: they would find the Sudovians defenceless, having laid down all their weapons on the bank of the Angrapa river. The brothers' army trusted him and did as he advised. When they approached the place the enemy was waiting for them, as had been agreed in advance, and immediately attacked them. When the brothers realised they had been so treacherously betrayed they retreated to a nearby hill, from which God's troops defended themselves valiantly. The battle was so fierce that many on both sides were killed. When the killing had gone on for long enough, finally, as God ordained, the Christians were defeated. The Prussians gained the upper hand and the victory was theirs. Twenty brothers and their entire army were killed in this calamity. And so the battle ended.

**How Wiesenburg was destroyed
Lines 12,227–302; III, 117**

The castle of Wiesenburg, which you have often heard me mention, was besieged by the Prussians for nearly three years during their revolt, according to what I have read. They set up three trebuchets in front of the castle, from which they subjected the brothers to frequent heavy bombardments and daily attacks. One day, when some of the besieging army had ridden off a way, it happened that the brothers were fortunate enough to capture one of the trebuchets and bring it in to the castle with them. They used it to defend themselves, often inflicting serious damage on the enemy army and gaining respite for themselves. Some time after this the brothers and their garrison ran out of food so completely that they were no longer able to survive there so they had to secretly abandon the castle. They left it in 1263

and took the road to Masovia. When the Barthian leader, whom they called Diwan, heard that the brothers had run away with all their men, he set off in hot pursuit with a troop of armed men. When he had chased them for a good while, his men became discouraged because their horses were exhausted. Then he had the idea of selecting the 13 men with the best horses and followed the brothers' tracks with them until he caught up with them: this was a measure of how angry he was with them. The brothers and their companions were so starving that they did not put up much of a defence: they were incapable of defending themselves or fighting from weakness and tiredness. He killed three of them in the first onslaught but when the others saw the danger they were in they began to defend themselves in spite of their weakened state. They did this so effectively that the Prussian leader was so seriously wounded that they were barely able to rescue him. The brothers set off immediately on their way again and escaped without further incident.

How Kreuzburg was destroyed

Lines 12,303–52; III, 118

In the year of our Lord 1263 the castle at Kreuzburg was besieged for three years by the Natangians, who attacked it with three trebuchets. They also built three fortified towers around the walls of the castle. However, the dangers posed by these machines did not weaken the resolve of the brothers in control of the castle and they held on to it for a long time, defending it valiantly. The brothers and their men often risked coming through the gates, across the drawbridge and skirmishing with the Prussians with spears and in other ways, during which many Prussians died at their hands. When this had been going on for three years and the brothers had enjoyed many victories in these raids against the Natangians, they became very afraid, because their food supplies were exhausted and they did not know what to do for the best. Finally lack of food forced them to abandon the castle secretly one night. Their departure was immediately made known to the Natangians, who lost no time in setting off in pursuit. They hated them so much that they killed all the Christians; only two brothers escaped with their lives. Christ, receive them all in your name into your kingdom. Amen!

How Bartenstein was besieged

Lines 12,353–492; III, 119

Four hundred brothers and armed men were stationed in the castle at Bartenstein to defend it during the siege. I heard that the Prussians had built three very strong siege towers round the castle and garrisoned them with 1,300 brave fighters, who never left them at any time. In addition they had three trebuchets with which they constantly bombarded the garrison in the castle. Nonetheless, however often they attacked they were unable to make any headway because the resistance was so

fierce that they were always repulsed, having suffered casualties and damage to their reputation. Some limped, some crawled, some were carried away, some were exhausted and some were dead, according to the fortunes of war. The brothers passed the time this way every day and had many skirmishes with the enemy during which they killed many Prussians. They had many heroic adventures. There was a man called Miligedo in the castle at this time who was strong, manly and bold, and so brave in battle that the Prussians regarded him as equal to half the garrison in the castle. They wanted to kill him and had a meeting to discuss how they could capture and murder him. They thought up many plans, and settled on this one: they set up an ambush and then they sent out a valiant warrior they selected specially, who went to the front of the castle and shouted, as Goliath did to the Israelite army, whether there was any brave man in the castle who dared fight him in single combat.¹ Miligedo was pleased when he heard this and immediately asked permission of the brothers, which was granted, to fight against the presumptuous challenger. He and the brothers were unaware of the plan to lure him to his death so he was keen to join battle in front of the castle. He approached the man, who ran away as planned. Then the group of men who had been hidden burst out of their hiding place. This treachery shocked Miligedo, because he was unable to save himself by retreating. He ran after the champion and killed him as he ran. Then he went on running until he reached the forest because he was a strong runner. In this way he escaped from the enemy and finally made his way back to the castle on secret paths, arriving there safe and sound. I imagine the Prussians were not pleased about that. From then on they set so many traps and ambushes in so many different ways that finally they accomplished their aim of killing this valiant warrior by treachery rather than strength. They killed a warrior known as Troppo who was renowned and held in high regard for his manly exploits in a similar way. O Christ sweet saviour, let these doughty warriors inherit the kingdom of heaven, since they so bravely shed their blood in your name. The death of these two heroes caused both joy and desolation; while the Prussians expressed their great rejoicing with much boasting and a lot of noise, the Christians on the other hand were sick at heart from the distress of the heroes' death. They wanted to put an end to the Prussians' celebrations and arrogance, so they had two high gallows built in front of the entrance to Bartenstein where they hanged 30 hostages sent to them by the Prussians, whom they had been holding prisoner. The sight of their relatives and sons hanging so pitifully in front of them grieved the Prussians so much that there was no more rejoicing for several days. Their boasting turned into lamentation, their happiness changed into bitterness and their joy was transformed into suffering.

¹ 1 Samuel 17, 10.

**How the three siege towers were destroyed and more than a thousand
Prussians killed
Lines 12,493–532; III, 120**

After this, violent warfare erupted between the brothers' men and the Prussians who were besieging Bartenstein. The pretext for the fighting was a pot which the Prussians used to cook whatever had been ritually slaughtered as a sacrifice according to their religious practices. The pot had to be carried from one siege tower to another; this resulted in an attempt to seize it which went on until the brothers and 150 men had left the castle. It turned into a tremendous battle, during which the brothers seized the pot and, fighting their way even further forward with the help of God, overran all three siege towers. Many Prussians were lying there sleeping off bouts of drinking; their sleep became the bitter sleep of death. The brothers slaughtered nearly thirteen hundred of the men who had been deployed to defend the fortifications; hardly any of them escaped. The fortifications were burned down and the battle ended with no deaths on the brothers' side other than the marshal. May God have mercy on him!

**How Bartenstein was lost
Lines 12,533–642; III, 121**

The Prussians arrogantly rebuilt the siege towers again in the fourth year of the siege of Bartenstein; this was in the year of our Lord 1264, and they manned and equipped them with more men and arms than before to attack the castle. This caused the brothers concern because their supplies were running low and they and their people were suffering from such great shortages and were so hungry that they were forced to eat the skins of horses and cattle. I imagine that even children's food would have tasted good to them then. When the brothers and their companions could no longer withstand these privations they began to think about how they could escape. But before they began to make good their escape they tricked the Prussians three times like this: they took up their positions quietly and secretly and stayed quiet and hidden from morning until the middle of the day, with no-one moving, as planned. This total silence deluded the Prussians into thinking that they had all deserted the castle. As a result they all rushed at once because they were all keen to get inside. When those inside calculated that they were close enough, everyone on the battlements broke their silence; they shot, hurled, stabbed and killed many of them. Many who were mortally wounded had to be carried away. They played this trick three times, without actually leaving the castle. I read that there was a pious brother in the fortress who from the outset prayed devoutly to God to reveal to him what the best course of action would be in this time of suffering. And behold, a voice from heaven was heard saying the following words in Latin: 'Judea and Jerusalem, do not be afraid and leave this place tomorrow. God will indeed be with you. Remain true in your hearts and you

will have the consolation of seeing God's protection shielding you.'¹ The day after they had heard the voice they divided themselves and their followers into two sections, taking the holy relics with them. One section quickly reached Königsberg in safety, while the other arrived safe and sound at Elbing. When they went they had left one brother behind at Bartenstein who was not capable of leaving with them because he was old, sick and blind. This poor, good brother survived several days. He rang the bell for worship at the usual times and in this way was able to deceive the enemy. When this had gone on for a while and they had not seen anyone in the castle they began to approach it. Since there was no resistance from the garrison they came right into the castle and killed this good brother, spilling the blood of this old man and taking control of the castle, which they often used afterwards as a base for attacks on the brothers.

How the castle at Wehlau was besieged **Lines 12,643–714; III, 122**

At the same time the evil people, including Prussians, Sudovians and Lithuanians, assembled a mighty army along with craftsmen and arms, which invaded Sambia and fought as viciously as ever enemies had fought each other. This army besieged the castle known as Wehlau. The Lithuanians were sent to one side of the castle with a trebuchet; on the other side the others also decided on a trebuchet and with these they bombarded the castle on a daily basis. According to what I have read this went on for eight days without a pause, without making much progress. Finally they combined their forces to attack. The bowmen shot sharp arrows; they violently bombarded the castle with huge stones from the trebuchets. Armed or unarmed, they all took part in the attack. Some brought wood and others burning straw up to the castle, causing great suffering to those who were besieged there. One of them, called Heinrich, was particularly skilful and courageous in his dealings with the enemy. His surname was Taupadel. He was a skilled master bowman and afterwards became a member of the order. He strengthened the besieged men's resistance and often bravely helped them to extinguish the fires which had been raised to endanger the castle. Many heathens were wounded and killed in this desperate battle. Heinrich Taupadel shot the man in charge of the Lithuanian army, a very powerful nobleman. On another occasion he became aware that the man in charge of the trebuchet was climbing high up it to fix something. I do not know what; when he was sitting on the arm Heinrich took aim with his crossbow and pinned his hand to the trebuchet with an arrow, so that he could not move it. When the men realised that he had such a tremendous aim, it made them so afraid that they abandoned the attack and moved off.

¹ 2 Chronicles 20, 17.

How Brother Helmerich, the master, 40 brothers and many Christians were killed**Lines 12,715–836; III, 123**

During that same year,¹ as is well known, the leader of the Natangians, Henry Monte, decided to assemble a large and powerful army and invaded the Kulmerland, where he attacked so aggressively, killing and burning, that all the buildings in the territory were destroyed by the invaders; only the fortresses managed to remain standing. This evil man stained the ground red everywhere with the huge amounts of Christian blood he spilled. He also drove away countless women, children horses and other goods as plunder. After he had gone there was nothing left; he took it all with him. When the master, Brother Helmerich, became aware of these lamentable events he immediately assembled all the forces at his disposal and set off without delay in pursuit of the enemy. He followed them and caught up with them at Löbau. He did not hesitate; the master cleverly sent his advance guard into battle, exhorting and encouraging them to fight valiantly for the heavenly reward we know that God gives to his soldiers. The warriors of our Lady attacked the enemy. The Prussians had entrenched themselves behind a defensive palisade and put up a stiff defence against the Christians. However, they finally retreated from their defences and took flight. The brothers' troops followed them, killing many of them. In the headlong pursuit the Christian army was dispersed across the battlefield, chasing the enemy, and their banner was left poorly defended. When the Prussians saw this they began to gather again in their defensive position and battle raged on again for a long time. Finally God, whose judgement is incomprehensible, decreed that His men should lose and that Master Helmerich and Brother Dietrich the marshal should die. I read that 40 brothers and the whole army died with them. On this terrible day the poor Christian people in Prussia experienced terrible grief and mourning from the blow of this defeat, which was reckoned to be even greater and more damaging than the defeat the brothers had suffered in Curonia which I told you about earlier; because although more people were killed in that battle, their distress was greater now because all the wise men in Prussia, the elder statesmen and brave men who had sustained and protected Prussia with good advice and brave exploits all died on that day. Alas, sweet Jesus, have pity on them and on the bitter distress the Christians endured in Prussia. Afterwards, at night, a hermit who lived near the battlefield often clearly saw many candles in the area where the Christians had been cut down. This demonstrates clearly that the Christian army which had shed its blood there had already received from Christ the good King the crown of martyrdom, and it was spreading its wondrous light, brighter than the sun. Praise be to Christ, who gives such magnificence to those who suffer for Him here!

¹ 1263.

Of Brother Ludwig, the seventh master of Prussia
Lines 12,837–48; III, 124

After the tumult of the battle Brother Ludwig von Baldersheim became seventh master of Prussia in the year 1265 and held office for six years.¹ The marshal was Brother Friedrich von Holdenstedt.

About the arrival of many pilgrims in Prussia and how Brandenburg was built
Lines 12,849–960; III, 125 and 127

Once news of this severe setback, the terrible situation in Prussia I have described, the fact that the Christians had been expelled from these strongholds and word of how hard-pressed the Christians were became known in Germany many lords, kings and princes who were truly devoted to God were moved by it. It was hard for them to hear it, but even harder to endure the fact that through the resentment of the devil Christianity might be extinguished in Prussia and driven out, when it had been planted there with such initial difficulty and with terrible loss of Christian blood. The lords were in agreement that they wanted to eradicate the Prussians' hateful pride and raise up again by force the belief in God which had been brought low in that land. So the duke of Braunschweig and the landgrave of Thuringia² set out on the pilgrim's path to Prussia, seeking righteous revenge. They brought many people with them and a great deal of equipment for war. However, this pilgrimage brought little benefit because the winter was so mild that they were unable to inflict any damage on the enemy. Deeply concerned, they made their way home again. This was in the year of our Lord 1265. The following year saw the arrival of a strong force under the leadership of the margrave of Brandenburg; his son and his brother accompanied him on the campaign. These three men came to Prussia in the name of our Lord to offer consolation to the Christians. However, their arrival did not rescue them from their misery: the winter was so warm that no campaigning was possible, and this caused them a great deal of distress. Nonetheless, once the margrave realised his intentions had been thwarted, on the advice of the brothers he built a castle on the banks of the River Frisching.³ The castle was named Brandenburg after the margrave's seat. He requested that the fortress should keep this name as a lasting memorial to him, and then he returned home. The following year that valiant warrior King Ottokar of Bohemia came to Prussia, arriving in the year of our Lord 1268. This prince came with bold knights

¹ Ludwig von Baldersheim was in fact master in Prussia from 1263 to 1269.

² Albrecht I von Braunschweig (1236–79) and Albrecht II, the Degenerate, landgrave of Thuringia (1240–1314).

³ Modern Prokhladnaya river, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia. Brandenburg is modern Ushakovo.

and a large, powerful army to help the Christians because he hoped to help and rescue them from the crisis. Unfortunately these plans were completely thwarted by the mildness of the winter, because the time had not yet come when God chose to have mercy on His poor suffering followers and to help them. His intention was to chasten them even more with worries and terrible punishments.¹ For this reason the king's wishes had to be set aside. He was visibly bitterly dejected when he set off home again leaving the poor Christians in a dangerous situation. Christ, have mercy on them!

About Brother Ulrich and how he killed 50 Prussians
Lines 12,961–13,010; III, 126

According to what I have read there was a brother at Königsberg at this time called Ulrich von Magdeburg who was reputed to be so strong that he alone was the equal of many other people. This is a good example: he lifted two armed men with two fingers simply by hooking the back of their belts, and lifted them both high in spite of their resistance. He was sent with other brothers and armed men to protect and guard ships which had arrived from overseas and which had previously been attacked by the Prussians, who had killed many of the crew. During this time Brother Ulrich was on look-out duty with only a little back-up when five ships approached, manned by many Prussians who intended to destroy the Christian ships as they had done on many occasions previously. When they were within range, he pulled the mast from his own ship and hit the ships so hard with it that the Prussians dropped their oars and the rudder. As he carried on attacking them water poured into the ships, they sank to the bottom and 50 men drowned with the ships. When the others saw this wholesale slaughter they fled.

About the death of Swantopelk, duke of Pomerelia, and how his son
Mestwin turned against the brothers
Lines 13,011–86; III, 128

At the same time, Swantopelk, the duke of Pomerelia, entered on the path of all flesh; in the agonies of his death throes he called his sons to him and gave them his final words in the form of this advice: 'Sons,' he said, 'listen to me and keep these words firmly in your mind! Unfortunately I waged war all my life against the Teutonic Brethren, investing all my energy and skill in attacking and overwhelming them and sometimes inflicting some damage on them as you yourselves have seen and heard. I want to tell you the truth about this, since my death is approaching: since I devoted myself to attacking them I began to lose my standing and I completely lost my honour and my property while they on the other

¹ 2 Maccabees 6, 12–16.

hand made constant gains, because in truth, God is on their side and leads them in battle. For this reason I am now advising you that you should at no time enter into dispute with them, oppose them or wage war on them. Have them as your allies, honour them and be loyal to them, you will not regret it!’ Mestwin quickly forgot this advice then he came into possession of Pomerelia after his father’s death and was made its prince. In his wicked arrogance he set off on the false path his father had taken before him. He proposed to the Prussians with whom he had been negotiating that they attack and destroy the Kulmerland and the bishopric of Pomesania, which is situated opposite his castle, Neuenburg,¹ burning, robbing and killing many of the Christians. At this time the brothers had loaded 15 ships which were sailing down the Vistula; when they had travelled as far as Neuenburg they were ambushed and attacked by two troops of men. The Prussians fell on them from one position while the garrison of the castle on the other side inflicted such damage on them that they were forced to jettison overboard great quantities of the equipment they had brought with them to help the Christians and they barely escaped with the empty ships.

How this setback was avenged **Lines 13,087–128; III, 129**

When the master heard the news he quickly gathered together an army and set off for Neuenburg in Pomerelia. He laid waste to the area and burned everything until there was nothing left. He took off a great deal of all sorts of goods as plunder. He also took away many prisoners. This all happened on the feast day of St Peter and Paul.² Afterwards, when the autumn set in, the master took his army back to Pomerelia, to the area of Dirschau³ and ravaged that area too, burning everything. He left with a great deal of plunder and many prisoners. So the master avenged the savagery which had been inflicted on his people with savagery of his own. After this revenge raid had been carried out, Mestwin, who had raged against the brothers and their people like a lion, now became as docile as a lamb because of the damage inflicted on his people and his lands. As a result he humbly begged the brothers to restore the peace treaty which had been in place between them and pleaded with them until he finally convinced the master and the brothers to agree.

¹ Modern Nowe, Poland.

² 29 June 1266.

³ Modern Tczew, Poland.

How Brandenburg was destroyed **Lines 13,129–170; III, 130**

At this time the commander of Brandenburg was that great, gallant warrior Friedrich von Holdenstedt; he gathered whatever brothers and armed men he could and took them to an area of Natangia called Solidow near the castle of Kreuzburg, where he killed many people. He looted, took prisoners and burned the whole area. When he was happily setting off for home, a messenger came to meet him who told him that Brandenburg had been captured and destroyed by this means: a Prussian woman, a slave and the daughter of the devil, had run out of the castle and told Glappo, the leader of the Warmians, that the brothers had gone off on a raid and the castle was empty and defenceless. As soon as Glappo heard this he set off for the castle and attacked and captured it. When the messenger had given the commander this news he and all his men were overcome by grief. This damaging blow put an end to all their joyful celebrations. They went from there to Königsberg, from where the commander went by ship to Brandenburg and brought to safety the surviving brothers and men, who had been defending themselves and waiting for rescue in one of the towers of the castle.

How Brandenburg was rebuilt and about one brother's strict conduct of his life **Lines 13,171–228; III, 131**

When the margrave of Brandenburg heard the news of the destruction of the castle he had built in Prussia it grieved and hurt him, so he put together an army and returned to Prussia, where, with the advice of the brothers, he built another fortress on the same spot which he gave the same name as the first one. According to what I have read a brother called Hermann von Lichtenburg later lived in this castle. He was noble by birth and even nobler in his heart. This pure, virtuous man disciplined his body day and night with many chastisements. To this end this lover of God constantly wore armour instead of a shirt against his skin. It seemed right to him that when he was on campaign and fighting he should put on his other weapons over this armour, so that he could only move with difficulty. Moving in this way caused him such pain that his whole body was covered in sores as if he had been torn by thorns. Brother Peter, his confessor, criticised the bold, true hero and warned him he should take off his armour while he was working, and especially fighting, because his weapons were so heavy. 'No, not at all,' the worthy man replied. 'Nothing will induce me to take it off until I die. This is my firm resolve.' Now a wonderful miracle happened. That same night the Virgin Mary appeared to him and gently touched the noble warrior with her soft hands. The touch took away all his pain and when Brother Peter saw him again the following morning he found that all the wounds on his body were completely healed. His skin was clear, pure and glowing; may the bride of God be praised!

About Brother Dietrich, the eighth master of Prussia
Lines 13,229–40; III, 132

In the year of our Lord 1271 Brother Dietrich von Gattersleben was made master in Prussia; according to what I have read he was the eighth. He held the office very conscientiously for six years.¹ At the same time the warlike marshal was Brother Konrad von Tierberg the Elder.²

How Margrave Dietrich of Meissen laid waste Natangia
Lines 13,241–338; III, 133

1272 years after the birth of our Lord, Christ listened to the cries of His oppressed people in Prussia, because the time for them to grieve was over and the day had arrived when He intended to take pity on His people and turn their lamentation to joy. He saw to it that the praiseworthy hero Margrave Dietrich of Meissen came to fight in Prussia. He was the son of Margrave Heinrich, the virtuous prince who also toiled and fought in Prussia against the Pomesanians, as I described to you earlier. This praiseworthy man came to comfort the land, because he brought with him a force of magnificent knights and men to persecute the heathens and help the Christians. He was keen and ready to take the battle to the enemy. He went with the master and the brothers and their troops to Natangia. At the border of this region he found a fortress which prevented everyone from gaining access because it was so well defended by the local garrison. However, Brother Gunther von Regenstein and his brother, along with many of the brothers' men, undertook to capture the fortress from the Natangians. The entire enemy garrison was killed or captured and the fortress burned to the ground. Many of the Christians were also killed, and 50 of the pilgrims were killed by the Prussians. Have mercy on them, gracious God! After this that man of God, the good prince, following in the footsteps of his father, advanced like a lion who cannot be threatened or scared by the sight of any opponent, and disregarding all threats advanced as far as the market-place of Görken.³ That gives an indication of how powerful he was. He remained there three days and nights with his army and passed the time as follows. During daylight he raided, killed, robbed and burned all the surrounding area far and wide without encountering any resistance and wore them down to such an extent that the following year they submitted to the faith and the brothers once more. He lost 50 men killed during the raids. When this well-born prince, God's chosen warrior, had completed his campaign in such a laudable way, among the many other acts of benevolence he performed for the order he had 24 of his bold,

¹ Dietrich von Gattersleben was master from 1271 to 1273.

² In fact this was Konrad von Tierberg the Younger; see Scholz and Wojtecki, in Peter von Dusburg, *Chronik des Preussenlandes*, p. 251.

³ A village in the former district of Mohrungen, now Morąg, Poland.

noble men fitted out in the robes of the order and provided them with a superfluity of everything appropriate to them as members of the order and as knights. Having done this he left them there and he himself set off for home.

About Brother Konrad von Tierberg, the ninth master
Lines 13,339–50; III, 134

Brother Konrad the Elder von Tierberg became the ninth master of Prussia in the year of our Lord 1277 and held office for six years. Afterwards the grand master summoned him to a chapter meeting in Germany. He died on the journey.

How Henry Monte, the Natangian leader, died
Lines 13,351–88; III, 135

After the departure of the margrave, which was described earlier, the Natangians became very afraid. They were overwhelmed by the fear that there was no place secret enough where they could be sure of being safe from the brothers. For this reason their leader, Henry Monte, withdrew with his immediate circle into the wilderness for protection. Here he hoped to be safe from all his enemies. One day all his companions were away hunting and he was alone in his tent. Suddenly Brother Heinrich von Schönbürg, commander of Christburg, a bold hero, and Brother Helwig von Goltbach and a few men came upon the evil man without warning and without even knowing he was there. They joyfully went up to him and seized him and hanged him from a tree (which was what he deserved), running him through with a sword. So the devil's warrior died and reaped what he had sowed.

How Glappo, the Warmian leader, died and how the Warmians and Natangians submitted once more
Lines 13,399–454; III, 136

Glappo the Warmian leader had a man under him called Steynow who was very dear to him. He had often rescued him from mortal danger because of his love for him. This man finally thanked him as the wicked always do, by repaying good with evil and love with hate. Steynow repaid Glappo with suffering for love, evil for goodness and began to consider how he might betray him and make him pay with his life. In order to achieve this he told him it would be in his interests to come to a castle situated in Sambia on the shore of the lagoon directly opposite Brandenburg and named the day on which he should come with his men to capture the castle. In the meantime the evil Steynow went to see the commander of Königsberg, told him the story about Glappo and advised him under oath that

he should bring his people and come with him: it would be to his advantage. The commander followed him there with the brothers and some men. As Steynow had said, he found Glappo camped in front of the castle about to lay siege to it. Without hesitation the commander attacked the Warmians, killing all of them apart from their leader Glappo, whom he took as a prisoner to Königsberg, where he had him hanged on a hill which is still called Mount Glappo in his memory. That put an end to all his activities. Once their leaders were killed and others who used to foment unrest, as I have described, the Warmians and Natangians completely gave up their presumptuous ways and their hostility and once again submitted to belief in God and the brothers' rule.

This is about various battles conducted by all the cities and castles in Prussia during the second revolt; firstly in Balga
Lines 13,455–518; III, 138

Previously I gave you the dates of the main disputes which occurred during the second Prussian revolt. Now I want to give details of the individual battles which took place at this time in each Prussian district and each castle; that is to say how each castle and each city fought individually against the Prussians during the second revolt. However, the account will be out of sequence because I was not able to establish the year or date of each battle, which happened first and which later. I will simply write down what happened. I should therefore warn anyone reading this book not to criticise me if I get the order of when the battles happened wrong because there is no-one still living who can tell us this with certainty. Nonetheless, it is correct that battles which I will now describe for you took place during the 15 years in which the Prussians abandoned the faith for the second time, as I have told you before. Enough of this preamble. In the year of our Lord 1260 the Warmians, Natangians and Barthians turned away from the faith and Christianity and rebelled for the second time. They went on armed raids across their whole territories and killed whatever Christians they found there; the women and children were taken prisoner. Afterwards they raided Balga and stole the brothers' horses and cattle. This was not an isolated occurrence; they inflicted such losses on many occasions.

How three brothers and 40 men were killed
Lines 13,519–48; III, 139

After this, two powerful noble men, Scumo and Stucze, gathered a huge army to attack the Christians and went to Balga, where the brothers met them with their troops and mounted a vigorous defence. Two bold young noblemen in the Prussian army were killed. According to what I have heard there was such a thick fog that day that no-one could see anyone else at any distance. The bad visibility deceived

the brothers. The Prussians had positioned half of their army for an ambush but they could not see this and pushed forward to attack those who were fleeing from them across the bog. Then those who were lying in wait ambushed them and killed 40 men and three brothers. May God have mercy on them all!

How some Prussians died
Lines 13,549–92; III, 139

Right from the first days of the establishment of the castle at Balga there have always been good warriors there, both brothers and men, so bold and courageous and so fierce in battle that there was scarcely ever an army that approached Balga that was strong enough to attack it without suffering losses before it retreated. On one occasion a Prussian called Pobrawo assembled a large number of Natangians and Warmians for the purpose of attacking the brothers, and inflicting losses and casualties. So one night he sent out many foot soldiers to approach the plain at Balga quietly without raising the alarm and early the following morning he followed with his horsemen, killed three shepherds who were looking after their livestock, seized the herd and quickly drove it off. However, Brother Gerhart von dem Rhein and other brothers and their armed men set off in hot pursuit of the army and when they caught up with them they beat the Prussians off the looted animals and recovered all the livestock without the loss of a single animal. Pobrawo was killed along with six of his men. The others escaped by running away.

How the town and castle of Braunsberg were burned down
Lines 13,593–692; III, 140

Lord Anselm, who according to what I have read was a brother in the order, and the bishop of Warmia had built and garrisoned a fortress and a town nearby called Braunsberg. They were built on an island in the River Passarge,¹ scarcely two stones' throw from where the city and castle now stand. This Braunsberg was overrun by the Prussians with a great army during the first year of their second apostasy. The army stormed the castle for one whole day but the inhabitants of the town and the castle fought back valiantly and put up a strong defence. They barricaded all the places which might give access to the castle and the town with wagons and pieces of timber and defended it so fearlessly that many people on both sides were killed. When the Prussians saw that their attack had been thwarted they departed empty handed. After this period of terrible danger they had to send out 40 men from the castle and the town to collect wood and bring in the harvest: they were all killed. This terrible slaughter put the townspeople in such a state of fear that they began to lose confidence that they would be able to hold off the

¹ Modern Pasleka, Poland.

Prussians if they attacked again. So they came to the decision to burn down both the fortress and the town and they themselves left the area with their wives and children and their households, taking away with them only the equipment and possessions they were able to carry on their backs, which was very little. As they were leaving, they met 60 Christians the brothers had sent from Elbing to help them on the road. When they were told that Braunsberg had been burned down they all turned back at once to Elbing. Afterwards, in the year of our Lord 1279, Bishop Heinrich of Warmia rebuilt the castle and town of Braunsberg once more at a new location near the Passarge, where it stands to this day. I have heard it said of this bishop that when he was first consecrated and arrived in his bishopric he found his only income was one mark, which was paid to him as annual tribute by a mill. That treasure was quickly counted and even more quickly used up! May God rule over the church now! If the livings were as thin now as they were in those days I imagine no-one trained in law, canon law or the arts would find their way into them. I can guarantee that!

**About a battle fought by the brothers at Christburg and how many
Prussians were killed by a miracle
Lines 13,693–748; III, 141**

During the second revolt Brother Dietrich, who according to my sources was known as Rode, the commander of Christburg and a great hero in battle, brought together a great army of his brothers and pilgrims numbering 100 men and set off on a raid to Pogesania, where he engaged in looting, burning and killing. When he had finished and returned a huge crowd of Prussians followed him, which annoyed him and everyone with him because they could not leave, either by going straight ahead or going round them, without fighting the Pogesanians, who were closing in on them ferociously. When Brother Dietrich saw this he trusted in God and relying on His help he turned round and he and his men courageously attacked the enemy. The Prussians fled at once without putting up any resistance. The Christians pursued them and killed so many of them that never had so many people been killed by so few on a single day. They also took many prisoners and did as they pleased with them. While they were riding away from the battlefield they heard the prisoners saying that they had all seen a vision in the sky of the most beautiful young woman ever seen on earth; in her right hand she had a firm grip of the brothers' banner. 'When we went to attack them, the look on the young woman's face gave us such a fright that all our courage melted away and we became so afraid that we were incapable of anything and could not defend ourselves.'

How a refuge was captured
Lines 13,749–68; III, 142

The Pomesanians¹ gathered in force once more and rode up to Christburg to resume the fighting. They knew there was a refuge nearby where the Christian Pomesanians usually retreated in times of warfare. The Pogesanians attacked the stronghold until they finally captured it. They killed or took prisoner all the people they found there, both men and women, except those who were able to escape to Christburg. Then they burned it down and razed it to the ground.

**How 12 brothers and 500 men were killed and how the town of Christburg,
the outer fortifications of the castle and the Pomesanian refuge were
destroyed and the Christians there killed**
Lines 13,769–922; III, 143

Diwan, the Barthian leader, who was known as Clekine, after his father, and his comrade in arms Linko, a Pomesanian, launched an attack into the Kulmerland with a large army; when the garrison at Christburg and brothers from other places rushed off there with their troops in response to the war cries of this army, the Pogesanians, as Diwan had arranged in advance, came on foot and on horseback with all the force they could muster and attacked the area round Christburg. As was planned, they overran a castle called Tranpere close to Christburg and across from Marienburg.² They left their foot soldiers to besiege the castle and appointed one of them, called Colte, as their leader. The horsemen there carried the attack further into the area of Algent, where Marienburg now stands. From there they travelled as far as Marienwerder, burning and killing, looting and capturing whatever they encountered on the way. As soon as the brothers at the fortresses of Posilge and Vischovia³ heard the news that the Prussians were threatening Tranpere they lost no time in coming to the assistance of the brothers and townspeople of Christburg, all of whom they found already armed and prepared for battle. They set off and when they were close to the aforementioned castle of Tranpere, which, as I have said, was under siege, the enemy fled from the scene; the brothers went after them and killed many of them. Colte, too, met his end there. Those of them who escaped on foot met the troops on horseback who had devastated the region and they too were very shocked by the terrible defeat they had suffered. The Prussians on horseback and the foot soldiers joined forces and moved off towards the River Sorge, where they pitched camp, finding shelter and setting up their tents; the brothers pitched their camp on the other side of the river on the meadow outside

¹ This should read 'Pogesanians' and appears to be a scribal error.

² Modern Malbork, Poland.

³ Modern Fiszewo, Poland.

the village called Paganstein.¹ When the Prussians saw them and realised that they intended to fight them there and that it was impossible to escape, they agreed on the following clever strategy: when the Christians had set up camp, taken off their armour and unsaddled the horses, had stood down their look-outs and were completely care free, the Prussians secretly sent half of their army across the river. While the Christians thought it was safe to relax, half of the Prussians launched a ferocious onslaught from the front and half from behind, and before they were ready to defend themselves against the attack, twelve brothers and a good five hundred men lay dead and the others fled with all speed to Christburg. It too was besieged by the heathens who chased them back there. This gave rise to terrible grief because they had won three strongholds: the town, the outer fortifications of the castle and a refuge used by the local peasants. These strongholds were all burned down and none of the people in them survived; they were captured or killed apart from a few who escaped death by fleeing to the brothers' castle. After the tumult of battle there were no longer any more Christians at Christburg, according to what I have heard, apart from three brothers, three servants and a Pomesanian called Sirenes who was being held in the castle in chains on account of crimes he had committed. When he saw the enemy approaching the drawbridge he tore off his chains and constraints and took up a sword and a lance; like a fearless lion he bounded on to the drawbridge and prevented the Prussians from entering until the gate could be closed. After that a brother shot and killed a man who had been put in charge of 40 bound captured Christian children. They were freed and ran away into the castle, rescued from lifelong captivity.

How many Prussians were killed Lines 13,923–80; III, 144

The aforementioned Diwan began to persecute the Christians more and more viciously. He was inflamed with hatred and murder. He launched another attack with his men in the area of Christburg and the neighbouring Marienburg, thinking that there was no possibility of encountering any resistance, because all the brothers and any of their people who were capable of defending the area had previously been killed or taken prisoner. For that reason in this second onslaught on the area, during which he rode across the country, rounding up plunder until nothing more remained, he sent his army on ahead of him with the spoils, following behind himself with only a few men. The brothers had been watching this from Christburg and Elbing and had been following in his tracks with their own men, albeit a small force compared to Diwan's. They simply put their trust in God, with whose help one man can see off 1,000 and two can terrify 10,000.² They launched the

¹ Dusburg has Poganste. Modern Minięta, Poland, approximately five kilometres south of Christburg (Dzierzgoń).

² Deuteronomy 32, 30.

attack on the enemy in God's name at the River Chebar¹ and caused a great uproar, charging at them on their horses and attacking them. In the battle Diwan's relative Dabore and the whole Prussian army were killed before they could mount their defence; only Diwan escaped the battle with a small group of followers and at no little disgrace to himself. In this way the enemy was silenced and the plundered goods won back. The brothers took these with them joyfully back to their own lands, giving thanks to God for their good fortune.

About the difficulty of provisioning Christburg
Lines 13,981–14,070; III, 145

The brothers at Christburg were so completely surrounded on all sides by the enemy's forces that supplies had to be brought in with great difficulty from Elbing. This caused great problems on three successive occasions: whenever they tried to ship supplies of food and other requirements on the River Sorge the Prussians anticipated them and captured everything on the ships, killing the brothers and their men. This vicious persecution caused such distress and hunger in Christburg that it would have had to be evacuated if it had not been assisted by a Pomesanian nobleman known as Samile. He covertly provided supplies of foodstuffs for the castle, because he was officially on the side of the enemy, but secretly was on the side of the brothers. This caused him great difficulties later with the Prussians: when they found out they captured him, tied him up and poured boiling water into his mouth. Then they cruelly put him over a fire and roasted him until he was nearly dead and then they sent him in this state to the brothers. He remained with them and lived a long life thereafter. He left a son called Tustim. Finally, the castle was in the throes of such great hunger that the brothers were at a loss to know what to do for the best, except to tell the loyal Pomesanians who had stayed with them to ride away, telling them that it would be better for them to go elsewhere and save their lives than to die of hunger with them there, and that their rights and liberties would be unaffected. See how God's goodness flowed in a wonderful torrent, filling the brothers and other Christians in those days, not just here, but right across Prussia, with the gracious patience to endure and make light of all their many troubles, great hardship, which sometimes even resulted in death and was too hard for human nature to bear, and unspeakable pain. You did not see them being downcast, grumbling or becoming bitter; instead they were always mild and behaved in every respect as if they were in paradise.

¹ Compare Ezekiel 1.

About Brother Engelkin
Lines 14,071–92; III, 146

According to what I have read there was a brother called Engelkin at Christburg at this time, a native of Westphalia. He was a devout man, pure in body and mind and dedicated to God. Among the many other virtues he possessed in abundance and practised, he used in particular to wear an iron hauberk next to his skin instead of a shirt. With this torment he disciplined his flesh and remained virtuous. Up to the time of his death he used up four of these hauberks, all of them old, rusted and battered.

About the destruction of the city of Marienwerder
Lines 14,093–206; III, 147–8

The arrogant people had not yet tired of their murderous acts and were not satiated with Christian blood. In their devilish hatred they took up arms once more to persecute the Christians, intending to kill, martyr and torment them, and launched an attack with a great army (this was at the time when in their wickedness they had rebelled for the second time, as I have told you) and marched as agreed on St Marienwerder. When they were nearly there they chose a suitable place where they set up an ambush with good soldiers and then moved on to the town with just a few men. Since their army seemed so weak, as was their intention, the brothers and their armed men, along with the townspeople, set out to launch a fierce attack on the enemy on the field between the mill and the town; many Prussians were killed or wounded in the battle. When the Christians had completely overwhelmed them the troops who had been waiting in the ambush attacked. There were so many of them that they quickly killed nearly all of the brothers and Christians; hardly any of them escaped. They fled into the town, pursued furiously by the Prussians, who then also captured the town and took prisoner or killed everyone who was there at that time. Some managed to escape the disaster by fleeing to the castle. Then the army completely burned down the town and marched off with huge amounts of plunder. After the brothers had rebuilt the town of Marienwerder at great expense of money and effort the Prussians marched once more into the Kulmerland with an army too large to count and laid waste to it again, burning everything and then moving on to attack the castle known as Belchau, on the Ossa. It belonged to a Pomesanian called Jon, the son of Sarginus. Brother Konrad, known as the Swabian, from Elbing, went down to this castle with many armed men and engaged in such a fierce exchange of spears with them that many on both sides were wounded. After this the Prussians made off towards the town of Marienwerder, which their army surrounded and fiercely attacked, storming it until they captured it and burning it down once more to inflict more losses on the Christians. However, some of them came into the castle; others saved their lives by defending themselves in one of the fortified towers in the town. The other

townspeople were either killed by the enemy forces or taken away as prisoners. During these two attacks on the town the evil people showed great contempt for the representations of our Lord God, Mary and the saints, dishonouring them in many ways. They also desecrated and defiled altar cloths, church robes and other equipment which had been blessed and consecrated for His service. In addition the holy Eucharist was woefully scattered about and dishonoured. O strong God, avenge these acts.

How Starkenberg was built **Lines 14,207–246; III, 149**

According to what I have read, Brother Anno, who was grand master at that time,¹ sent letters to the master in Prussia, particularly requesting him to build a fortress on the River Ossa where it forms the boundary between the two bishoprics of Kulm and Pomesania; he himself would provide it with everything it required and provision all those who were chosen to garrison it. The good master rapidly complied, assembling a large number of people to build the castle. One day they were all there preparing and working on it, one absorbed in one task and the other on something else, according to their roles, when the Prussian army rushed in on them without warning and killed the whole defenceless assembly. The building work was also destroyed and remained so for a considerable time thereafter. Then the master selected a group of people once more and by the grace of God he saw to it that the building work on the castle was completed. He called it Starkenberg² and gave it a strong garrison of brothers and men.

¹ Anno von Sangershausen was grand master from 1256 to 1273 and successor to Poppo von Osterna. He was frequently in Prussia and Livonia in the years 1261 to 1266. The revolt in Prussia coincided with renewed attacks on the Holy Land by the Mamluks under their leader Baibars. He attacked Acre in 1263 and in 1268 he captured Jaffa and Antioch. In 1264 the order's general chapter enacted the so-called *Gesetze übers Meer*, by which neither the grand master nor the other senior officials were to be allowed to leave the Holy Land without permission of the chapter (*Statuten*, ed. Perlbach, p. 135). The order's headquarters at Montfort were captured and destroyed in 1271 and its holdings in the Holy Land were reduced to the lands it had in and around Acre. The grandmaster left shortly afterwards, probably to organise a crusade to relieve Prussia. See Gerard Labuda, 'Anno von Sangershausen', in Arnold (ed.), *Hochmeister*, pp. 31–3.

² Starkenberg was probably named after Montfort (German: Starkenberg), the order's headquarters in the Holy Land which it acquired in 1220 and finally had to abandon in 1271.

How Starkenberg was lost
Lines 14,247–310; III, 150

When the Prussians heard that the building work on the castle was complete, they were incensed and prepared a huge force to besiege the castle. But Brother Konrad von Blindenburg joined battle against them and received five wounds in five parts of his body; in his feet and his hands and the fifth in his side. He suffered the same wounds as Christ had done. The way the Prussians killed him was the way in which he had so often earlier been seen and heard begging God to die, with many tears and many heartfelt pleas. After this had happened they surrounded the castle and began to storm it. The brothers up in the castle fought back hard in defence; during the onslaughts of the enemy they greeted their guests with showers of sharp arrows which they rained down on them. They wounded and killed so many Prussians that they nearly lost heart. However, in the end they were so inflamed with rage that they would rather have died and been destroyed than let the fortress survive. So they attacked once more and stormed it so ferociously that many on both sides died. This crisis went on until the Prussians gained the upper hand and forced their way into the castle. There too they committed acts of great wickedness, barbarously hacking the brothers and the garrison to pieces and scattering their bodies to the winds. They also burned down the castle, reducing it to ashes. Many years later the fortress of Starkenberg was rebuilt beyond the Ossa in the Kulmerland, where it is to this day.

How Spittenberg was destroyed
Lines 14,311–32; III, 151

In Pomesania the brothers had built and controlled a castle called Spittenberg.¹ But when the Prussians had abandoned the faith for the second time, as I described earlier, they waged war on the brothers, causing a great many problems and in addition to food shortages, this demoralised the brothers and their household so completely that in the end they were no longer able to fight the enemy; instead they burned down the fortress and moved away. That place has remained desolate until this day, because no-one has rebuilt it.

About the war in the Kulmerland against the brothers during the second revolt and firstly about the bishop of Kulm
Lines 14,333–60; III, 152

The Dominican Brother Heidenreich was bishop in the Kulmerland at the time that the Prussians abandoned the faith for the second time and were showing their

¹ Possibly modern Ostrzyca, Poland.

contempt for it with all the strength at their disposal, as I have been describing. A story is told about this bishop that the gentle Virgin had appeared to a poor man and sent him off with a letter which he brought to this same bishop. When he had read through the letter the bishop found his whole life described in it in detail. It was also written that the Christians in Prussia would still have to endure much distress and bitterness and suffer martyrdom in the future at the hands of the Prussians for their heavenly reward.

How Kulmsee was besieged **Lines 14,361–426; III, 153**

A few days after this the Prussians besieged the town of Kulmsee¹ so aggressively that the bishop of the Kulmerland became very anxious. He assembled all his court and the knights and men who had fled into the town to escape the noise and shouting and pleaded with them, offering them absolution for their sins, to go out and investigate and estimate the size and strength of the army. When they went outside an isolated group of Prussians came up to them and they began fighting, wounding one of the Prussians who was so much taller than all the others that he was head and shoulders above them as they walked about. They dragged him into the town. The Prussian leader was so concerned about this man's imprisonment that he swore with alacrity that he would leave the area and would not attack any Christian if they would hand the wounded man back to the Prussians. That is what happened: he was handed over and in this way Kulmsee avoided being destroyed. After this, in August, a large Prussian army concealed themselves in a wood called Vogelsang, where they stayed for 13 days. Now and then a small troop appeared on the plain, harassing the inhabitants of Kulmsee as usual and chasing them away from the harvest. Finally, when the townspeople thought that the Prussians had gone, and the corn all had to be harvested or it would be destroyed, every last man and woman went out together to bring in the harvest. When the Prussians saw them they attacked with their whole army and killed the defenceless men and women; they took the children off into lifelong captivity.

About the wars of the brothers at Rehden **Lines 14,427–50; III, 155**

It is impossible to explain fully, or describe in verse the pain and misery the brothers and other Christians at Rehden suffered to protect the faith at the time of the second revolt of the godless Prussians, because they passed this way when they wanted to enter or leave the Kulmerland. In fact I have been told that the town of

¹ Modern Chełmża, Poland.

Rehden was captured twice and any people living there were taken prisoner and condemned to a life of misery or killed by the wild Prussians.

About Martin von Golin
Lines 14,451–526; III, 156

At this time a brother from the fortress at Rehden and Martin von Golin were told to ride into the wilderness to see whether they came across anything of interest. They wandered a distance off the known paths. When they had been riding around disorientated in the wilderness for some time, one going this way and the other another way, they eventually saw three Prussians coming towards them. They killed two of them at once; they kept the other one alive with the intention of making him lead them back to the right path. But this monstrous fool led them into enemy territory. When they realised he had played a trick on them they killed him and rapidly retreated. However, five Prussians on horseback had witnessed the incident and rode quickly after them to attack them. They captured them, tied them up roughly and set two men to stay with them and guard them. The others went off after the brothers' horses, which had run away, hoping to be able to use them themselves. The two guards planned to behead Martin while the others were looking for the horses. As they held their unsheathed swords above his head, he said, 'It would not be wise of you to spoil these good clothes by shedding my blood on them. If you were thinking straight it would be better to keep them clean: the colour goes out of them if you wash them.' The Prussians thought this was good advice and they untied him to take his clothes from him; when his arms were free he punched one of them on the mouth to make him drop his sword. Martin seized the sword and slashed at them until they were both dead. Then he comforted and untied his comrade, the brother. Straight afterwards the three others came rushing back. They defended themselves, fighting them until they had subdued and killed them. They loaded up all the plunder in God's name and went straight back to Rehden without getting lost.

More about Martin von Golin
Lines 14,527–606; III, 157

At the same time about twenty Prussians were observed riding into Poland, looting and burning without meeting any resistance. While they were there, the brothers at Rehden sent out Martin von Golin, mentioned above, and 17 companions, to track them down, so that when they came back he might try to see if God might give him any of the spoils. Martin posted guards but these same Prussians came upon them as they were sleeping. They killed one of them at once, and by tying him up and threatening him they forced the other to tell them about the ambush waiting for them. He told them the place of the ambush and the number of men. When

they had found this out they tied him to a tree and began to attack the hiding place. The Christians put up such valiant resistance that many on both sides were killed. One of Martin's companions who gone off to swim naked across a river to try to catch crayfish for them to eat saw the battle, and shouting, he swam back over to help his men. Seizing a dead man's sword and shield he joined in the fight, naked as he was, and was appallingly hacked at, stabbed and wounded, to the extent that you could see great shreds of flesh hanging from his naked body. They fought long and hard until they became so tired that on three occasions they broke off and then started again when they had regained their strength. They went on until all the Prussians and Germans on both sides were dead. Afterwards the guard that the Prussians had tied to the tree arrived at the battlefield and found all his friends and the enemy dead, with one exception, Martin, who was still alive, but only barely. He gently laid him on a sledge and took him, the Prussians' possessions, their weapons, clothing and their horses, and anything else worth having, and went home to Rehden.

How many Christians were killed
Lines 14,607–38; III, 158

In the Kulmerland there was a fortress on a hill called Wartenberg, protected by a lake which surrounded it. The brothers controlled this fortress and stationed men there to guard and protect it. One Sunday, when all the people in the villages nearby did not have to work, they had gathered happily to dance and have fun and do the things people do when they are on holiday. While this was going on, and they were cheerful and carefree, the Sudovian army burst in on them without warning. The fun they had been enjoying was cut to pieces; their singing became mournful dirges of lamentation; their dancing, rounds and all their pleasurable games ended in bitter agony because the heathens killed all the men there. Girls, children and women were driven off into perpetual captivity.

How Wartenberg was destroyed
Lines 14,639–62; III, 159

However often and however many Christians the heathens killed, they always thought it was too few. They wanted to destroy the faith at its roots and silence it completely all over Prussia. For this reason the Sudovians gathered together even more men than before and marched on Wartenberg, attacking ferociously again and again. The brothers defended themselves as best they could. Nonetheless, finally the whole army surrounded the castle with a ring of fire and captured it by burning it to the ground. In their fury they brutally killed two brothers and all the people in the castle. The place has been deserted ever since.

How Birglau was captured
Lines 14,663–92; III, 160

Trinota, the son of the king of Lithuania and a bold heathen, brought together a force of 30,000 heathens for the purpose of persecuting the Christians. When he was approaching Prussia he divided the army into three sections: he dispatched one to Masovia and another to the region of Pomesania. His men burned and laid waste to these two provinces. The third section of the army set off towards the region of the Kulmerland, and quite apart from the huge amount of misery they inflicted there, they captured the fortress at Birglau,¹ where they gathered together and drove away all the brothers' possessions and livestock and all the people who had fled there. However, the brothers and their people were unharmed because they defended themselves valiantly against the heathen attacks in one of the towers.

How many Christians were killed
Lines 14,693–708; III, 161

Shortly after this event Brother Heidenreich, the bishop of Kulm, whom I have mentioned before, was due to consecrate the chapel of the infirmary outside the walls of the town of Thorn. When the church had been consecrated and the people were returning home, the Prussians attacked them on the road because they had heard news of the celebrations and knew that people would be gathered there. They killed all the men there and took away the women and children.

How the infirmary at Thorn was burned down, the town of Kulm attacked and the castle and town of Löbau burned down
Lines 14,709–84; III, 162

At the same time the Sudovians assembled such a big army that nothing that compared with it for size had ever been seen before in Prussia. These men moved into Löbau and committed many terrible deeds. Finally they destroyed both the castle and town of Löbau, then they travelled to Strasburg² in the Kulmerland where they divided the army into a number of battalions which they despatched to castles, so that when the Christians fled there for safety they could kill them or take them prisoner. After this they marched on to Thorn, where they destroyed everything they found outside its walls, including the hospital, which they burned to a cinder. Then they turned on the fortress at Kulm and stormed it with all their men for a day and a night, but to no avail because the townspeople put up a valiant defence against them. After they had laid waste to the Kulmerland for four

¹ Modern Bierzglowo, Poland.

² Modern Brodnica, Poland.

days, inflicting great damage, they set off for home, driving with them people, horses, many cattle and countless other plunder. During this same campaign a strong Sudovian frightened a Christian woman, chasing her into a bog and was so full of fury and hatred that he tried to murder her. When he caught hold of her she managed by the grace of God to set aside her womanly weakness and innate fragility and defended herself by pummelling him with her fists. She kept it up until he fell into the bog and then God gave her the courage to jump in on top of him, pressing hard on his throat in an attempt to strangle him. The sinful man began snapping like a dog until he got her thumb in his mouth and bit it off. That made her so furious that she scrabbled round and stuffed the injured fool's mouth, nose and ears full of mud and piled it on top of him until he suffocated. In this way the strong heathen died while the weak woman survived.

How many Prussians were killed

Lines 14,785–806; III, 163

Not long afterwards the Prussian army was seen marching on Kulm once more, looting and burning. They also slaughtered or captured many Christians and inflicted great misery on the region. Finally they charged up to Kulmsee, where they met with resistance from the townspeople, who fought them in front of the fortifications. They killed the Prussian leader and a great number of other Prussians. This saved the poor Christians who had been captured and were being held as prisoners; all of them were released and taken care of.

How Skumantas laid waste to the Kulmerland and killed some brothers and other Christians

Lines 14,807–42; III, 164

After this Skumantas¹ led the Sudovians into the Kulmerland once more, dividing his army into two. One section set off towards Thorn; the other went in the direction of Kulm and launched ferocious attacks on anyone they came across, because all they wanted to do was murder, burn and take prisoners. However, at about the time of vespers the two armies reassembled in front of the castle at Birglau, where, safe from all danger, they found lodgings and pitched their tents, relying on their strength and their power. That same night the brothers from the fortress came down during the silence while the enemy were sleeping and ran into their tents, disturbing their sleep by wounding and killing many of the Prussians. In their alarm they began shouting loudly and this was heard by the troop which was on guard duty. They made their way to the scene, wearing their armour and ready for

¹ Skumantas was the priest-warrior who led the Sudovians from the 1240s, see Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, pp. 53 and 138.

battle, and in the ensuing slaughter they killed two brothers and a half brother¹ and many men. In this way murder was repaid with murder.

How the castle at Schönsee was stormed and Diwan, the leader of the Barthians, was killed
Lines 14,843–98; III, 165

After this campaign Diwan, the leader of the Barthians, assembled eight hundred or more Prussians and set off with them to besiege the castle at Schönsee,² swearing by the great power of his gods that if the garrison were so misguided as not to give the fortress up to him at once, he would brutally hang both brothers and men from a high gallows in front of the main gate. But they ignored the threat even though there were no more than three brothers in the castle at the time and a few men whom they dressed in brothers' mantels and other insignia so that the enemy would see them and be scared. When Diwan's threat failed to scare the brothers he set up the many siege engines he had brought and began a ferocious assault on the castle. The garrison defended themselves bravely and fearlessly against him because their necks were at stake. They rained destruction on the skulls of the Barthians. From their vantage point the bowmen shot arrows to great effect, because within a short time many of the enemy were dead. Many were seriously wounded. Brother Arnold Kropf, shooting at random, shot the leader Diwan through the neck and killed him. This was highly significant because it rescued the whole garrison from the trap. When the Barthians saw this they left everything where it was and rushed off, travelling night and day until they reached their own country. This put paid to their arrogance.

How two castles were lost
Lines 14,899–962; III, 166

Finally, however, Skumantas, the leader of the Sudovians whom I have mentioned to you before, assembled a huge force of Rus'ians and Sudovians with which he launched an attack on the Kulmerland, persecuting the Christians there by burning and looting and reducing them to poverty in an attack which encompassed the whole region and lasted for nine days. In the course of this raid he approached Kulmsee, which a Polish knight called Ninerik had earlier promised to betray to him. With this treacherous intent the knight rode into the town as the heathen Skumantas and his men began to besiege it. As the townspeople ran on to the walls

¹ Half brothers were lower in status than the knights, priests and sergeants and were mainly occupied in household tasks or on the land. They were identified by the half cross on their mantel. They only begin to be documented after the middle of the thirteenth century.

² Modern Kowalewo, Poland.

to defend it, this evil traitor went up to the battlements to carry out his plan. When he found a suitable moment he blew two blasts on his horn, which was the signal he had agreed in advance with Skumantas. When the townspeople heard him they were very frightened and immediately took him prisoner. After they realised his treachery they hanged him from a high gallows in front of the gate, along with his son and one of his men: this was the right thing to do. When the wild Skumantas saw this he realised that his hopes had been thwarted and he decamped to a castle called Hemsot and attacked it until he won control of it, killing 40 men who had been sent to defend it. From there he went on to another castle which belonged to a knight called Zipfel, according to what I have read. He levelled the whole castle to the sand, from its flagpole down, and everyone he found in it was either taken prisoner or killed. He had all the goods removed and burned down both castles, reducing them to ashes in his anger.

About the wickedness of the Prussians who could speak German
Lines 14,963–94; III, 167

Henry Monte, the leader of the Natangians whose name I have often mentioned before, and other Prussians who had been brought up since their childhood with the brothers, perpetrated many evil deeds against the Christians during the revolts. On many occasions when the heathens set off on campaigns of destruction in the brothers' lands it happened that the Christians' route to their fortresses was blocked and they had to take cover in marshes and undergrowth and forests; when Henry realised this he took a troop of his men and began to visit the places where he calculated they would be, calling out in German: 'If anyone is hiding here he can stop worrying and return home free of danger because the enemy has left.' When the poor people heard this and came out feeling secure the Prussians were waiting for them and captured then or killed them. They did this frequently.

About the war of the townspeople of Elbing
Lines 14,995–15,010; III, 168

At the time when the Prussians rebelled against Christianity for the second time, as I described to you earlier, some noble Pogesanians remained true to the faith, but only a very few of them. These virtuous men left behind their kin and their inheritance and came with their household, wives and children to Elbing, where they have since remained loyal and upright supporters of the brothers.

How the castle of Wentlitz was destroyed
Lines 15,011–70; III, 169

At the beginning of the second revolt the Pogesanians, Sudovians and other Prussian peoples assembled a large army and went raiding the length and breadth of Pogesania and Pomesania, killing all the male Christians they came across; girls, women and children were taken into captivity. After this they turned towards Elbing and laid siege to the castle, attacking it until, after repeated assaults, they would have gained control of the outer bailey if they had not been prevented by a Prussian called Wirtel, the guardian of the castle, who came ferociously to its defence, stabbing and killing their leader with a thrust of his lance. After this they gave up the siege they had conducted with such ferocity. They were grief stricken at the fate of their leader and went off to a defensive position in the forest where the River Weeske flows into the Drausensee which they stormed and quickly captured, destroyed and burned down, killing all the people there except a few who were able to escape across the lake in boats. Seeing that things were going well for them they continued on their campaign to the castle called Wentlitz,¹ built above the river at Rogow, and attacked it ferociously. Those in the castle defended themselves bravely. The attackers continued their assault until the Christians in the castle were finally defeated and they captured the castle. They took prisoner or killed everyone there, both men and women, and reduced the castle to ashes.

How many townspeople from Elbing were killed at Liebhart's mill
Lines 15, 071–200; III, 170

In the year of our Lord 1273 the Sambians, Natangians, Warmians and Barthians wanted to submit² and return to the faith. The Pogesanians, however, remained recalcitrant in their paganism, and over the course of time they assembled an army of bold men and positioned it in a forest not far from Elbing, sending a small troop to raid the town. When the townspeople realised this they put on their armour and set off to fight these men, who retreated from them, drawing them after them and luring them far away from the castle. The townspeople pursued them ferociously and killed a number of the enemy. This went on until those who were hiding in the forest judged the time to be right. They burst out of their hiding place and cut off the retreat back to the castle. The townspeople were very afraid because there were so many of them that they could not defeat them in open battle. They retreated to

¹ Probably modern Weklice, Poland, 12 kilometres east of Elbląg.

² The word Jeroschin uses here is 'grizstange', the pole which was pushed between two combatants in a joust, when one of them has submitted. It is one of the most striking examples of his use of courtly vocabulary to describe the crusades. See Evald Johansson, *Die Deutschordenschronik des Nicolaus von Jeroschin. Eine sprachliche Untersuchung mit komparativer Analyse der Wortbildung* (Lund: Gleerup, 1964), here p. 195.

Liebhart's mill because it was fortified and could be defended. When the enemy saw this they surrounded the mill and attacked it fiercely. Those in the mill resisted so stubbornly that great damage was inflicted on both sides until eventually the Pogesanians broke off for a rest and to recover. After this, as they were about to launch another attack the heathens tricked the Christians: 'If you want to save your lives, give yourselves up as our prisoners. If you refuse you choose death and you will be killed here, make no mistake about it!' The townspeople were exhausted and no longer knew what they should do because they had used up all the supplies that they had found there, so they began to enter into negotiations. They entered into a binding agreement that 25 of their best men would be handed over immediately to the Prussians as prisoners to settle their dispute, and that the others should be free to leave in safety. As soon as this had been agreed and the prisoners had been handed over they broke their oath and the promise of safe passage which they had agreed and launched their attack once more with extraordinary violence, setting fire to the whole mill so that the Christians could not escape without being burned to death. When the heat of the fire became too much to bear a terrible struggle began. Those who tried to escape from the heat were brutally hacked to pieces by the heathens. Others, who jumped down to escape the inferno, landed on the hundreds of sharp lances the wicked Prussians had placed there. The others were engulfed in the flames and died a terrible death. So much Christian blood was spilled in this place that the millstream changed colour and ran with blood for the whole day. Some honourable men who are eminently believable who were standing on the battlements at Elbing while this slaughter was taking place said, and we can believe them unreservedly, that they saw the heavens opening and angels coming out to receive the souls of the Christians and take them to heaven, where they will have joy everlasting after the torment of martyrdom.

How this slaughter was avenged and all the Pogesanians killed and subjugated

Lines 15,201–300; III, 171–2

The master and the brothers were very troubled and distressed at this treachery and the terrible fate so wickedly inflicted on the Christians, and they wanted to avenge this wrongdoing and the terrible anguish it had caused or die in the attempt. With this in mind they gathered together all the manpower they could and launched an attack on Pogesania, devastating the whole country, burning and looting, killing all the men they encountered and taking away horses, cattle, children and women as prisoners. During this campaign they also captured the castle at Heilsberg, which at that time had been under the control of the Pogesanians, and put all the men there to the sword; everything else was driven off. After this the threat of warfare was removed and Prussia remained at peace.

God alone knows what dangers, fears, anguish and hardship the Brothers and the Christians suffered in the towns and castles and elsewhere in the country

during the 15 years of the Prussian revolt. No-one alive now knows the full extent of it. Because of the assaults of the enemy they seldom had the time or the peace to eat their meals without having to get up once or more to defend themselves or start fighting, so we can say of them, as is said in the scriptures of the Jews when they had to rebuild the holy city of Jerusalem and all the heathens were against them: they had to divide themselves into two armies; one got on with the work while the other was ready to defend them against the enemy's army from sunrise until the stars were in the sky. One hand did the work while the other wielded the sword.¹ In the same bitter distress God's people in Prussia suffered unspeakable hardships and yet suffered patiently. None of the misery with which they were constantly tormented daunted their spirit. They were sick and yet healthy, burning and yet unburned, sorrowful yet rejoicing, falling they were held up and dying they lived on, hard pressed yet unthreatened, sad but always happy, in danger and without fear.² This miracle was brought about by God's good grace, so they kept the sweetness of their disposition in the face of so much bitterness and death. In my heart I hold fast to the belief that in the furnace of utter wretchedness their consolation was the hope that God does not abandon His own people here on earth.³ He also raises to splendour in heaven those whom He has punished on earth, and those who are spared chastisement here suffer wretched punishments in the next world.

How Bartenstein was destroyed for the second time **Lines 15,301–18; III, 173**

When the Sudovians heard the news that the Barthians, Warmians and the other Prussian regions had returned to the faith and had submitted without resistance to the rule of the Brothers, they rebelled and secretly assembled a huge army and besieged Bartenstein (which was under the control of the Barthians, as it had been since the brothers had left) and they destroyed the castle and captured and killed all the people they found there.

How 2,000 Sudovians were killed **Lines 15,319–62; III, 174**

The following year the Sudovians, Nadrovians and Scalovians came together in force and laid siege to a castle close to Bartenstein called Beseleda, attacking it ferociously. Some of the defenders were not trying as hard as they might; when a woman called Nameda, Posdauprotus' mother, saw this, she said to her son, 'I

¹ Nehemia 4, 16–18.

² 2 Corinthians 6, 4–10.

³ 2 Maccabees 6, 16.

shall always regret having brought you into the world because you are incapable of protecting us and yourselves against the attacks the enemy inflict on us.' When the people in the castle heard these contemptuous words, the speech made them very ashamed and so angry that they immediately threw open the castle gate and all ran out to the enemy on the battlefield in front of it. There followed such ferocious hacking and killing that the cries of fear could be heard far and wide. They kept up the noise and the fighting until a thousand and more of the enemy lay dead on the field. After this the brothers rebuilt Bartenstein once more and have held it with God's help, against all treachery, until the present day.

A digression

Lines 15,363–92; IV, 37

Now I will include some of the story of what happened in other lands, according to the truth which I have heard.

In the year of our Lord 1253 Pope Alexander IV, who had earlier been a legate in Poland and in Prussia, came to the papal throne. He was known as William and had been bishop of Modena.¹ At this time the Holy Roman Empire was without a leader. This same good pope, gracious, generous and humble, showed pity to all the poor and performed many good works. He also did much good for the land of Prussia during his lifetime, because he saw with his own eyes the wretchedness and the hardships the brothers and other Christians were suffering.

About Brother Poppo, the sixth grand master

Lines 15,393–412; IV, 38

At this time, according to what I have read, the sixth grand master of the Order of the Teutonic House was Brother Poppo von Osterna.² In his day this hero conducted many a good and valiant battle in Prussia and Livonia against the heathens, both before and after he held the office of grand master. Finally, when he recognised that he was too weak and no longer capable of fighting because of his age and all the trials and tribulations, he humbly withdrew from the office; thereafter Brother Anno succeeded this virtuous man.

¹ Alexander IV was in fact Rinaldo di Jenne, pope from 1254 to 1261.

² 1252–56. See note p. 87, note 1.

Digression [continued]**Lines 15,413–562; IV, 39–46**

In the year of our Lord 1256 the princes of Germany who were nominated to elect the king of the Romans caused a schism by electing both of these men: Alfonso, the king of Castile and Count Richard of Cornwall, the brother of the king of England. This schism lasted a long time.

When 1257 years had passed since the birth of our Lord, Pope Alexander laudably raised to sainthood the pure maiden St Clare, the nun, originally of the Order of St Damian, who latterly became a Franciscan.

At the same lived the great, well-known Master Albert,¹ who had no equal in intellect or in canonical knowledge. He was German by birth and a member of the Dominican Order. God's great hero did not lay great store by worldly renown; he willingly gave up the bishopric of Regensburg, withdrawing from the world's vanities and making his home in the city of Cologne, where he lived for 18 years, reading and teaching clerics. When he was 80 years old he paid the price of all flesh and his body died, while his spirit gained eternal life free of care. This transformation took place in the year of our Lord 1280. His grave can be seen in Cologne. At this time Brother Thomas Aquinas was also flourishing in learning. He was a member of the same order and a pupil of the Albert mentioned above. This same man of God was canonised by Pope John XXII.

In the year of our Lord 1259,² the city of Constantinople, which had been captured and occupied by Latin forces, was re-conquered by a Greek emperor known as Palaiologus.

In the same year a violent struggle broke out between the people of Florence and Lucca and the people of Siena, in which at least 6,000 men were killed or captured.

In the year of our Lord 1260 the king of Hungary attacked and went to war with the king of Bohemia. He took with him 40,000 knights, mercenaries from many countries, according to what I have heard. The king of Bohemia met him with his army; 100,000 armed men on horseback who were practised in the arts of war and 7,000 heavy horses. They met in a terrible battle; when the armies launched their attack at full strength and came together in battle a thick dust rose up that covered men and the battlefield so completely with such a thick covering that neither banner nor helmet nor any of the other accoutrements of battle could be recognised at any distance, and this created such confusion that many people no longer knew who was friend and who was foe. The battle raged many long hours; at length the king of Hungary was wounded and fled with his army, and they were

¹ St Albertus Magnus or Albert of Cologne (1206–80).

² In fact this happened in 1261.

in such a panic that 14,000 of them perished by drowning in a raging torrent, over and above those who had died on the battlefield.¹

In the year of our Lord 1261 Pope Urban IV decreed that a feast day was to be celebrated to honour Corpus Christi. In the fifteenth year of the papacy of Pope Clement V during the Council of Vienne it was confirmed that this feast day was to be celebrated in perpetuity.

In the year of our Lord 1263 Pope Urban gave the kingdom of Sicily to Count Charles of Provence, the brother of the king of France. He was to be king if he could drive off Manfred, who had occupied it by force.²

About Brother Anno, the seventh grand master

Lines 15,563–76; IV, 47

According to what I have read, Brother Anno was the seventh grand master up to this time and held the office commendably.³ He was wise and ardent in his love of God. He did much to benefit the Order and the Holy Land, as is well known. Then he died on 8 July; that is his anniversary.

Digression [continued]

Lines 15,577–794; IV, 48–55

The comet is a star whose name comes from ‘coma’ which means ‘hair’, because when it begins to shine, a flame streams out from it, spreading like hair. Its appearance threatens death or famine or warfare. According to St Isidore it appears in the sky for a minimum of seven days and 80 days at most. The comet appeared in the year of our Lord 1264 and on its course it shone so brightly and so clearly that no-one who was alive at the time and who saw it could truthfully say that he had ever seen its equal for brightness. It moved from east to west, spreading the glow of its flaming hair far behind it. It brought portents to many parts of the world, but at least one of them is known to have come true: Pope Urban IV became ill when the comet was first seen and remained so for the three months the comet was in the sky. At length he died, and on the night of his death the star was no more to be seen.

In the year of our Lord 1265, Pope Clement IV crowned Charles king of Sicily as had been promised to him by his predecessor Pope Urban, as I mentioned before. This Charles, so I have heard, took the life and kingdom of Manfred, whom we

¹ The Battle of Kressenbrunn, fought for the possession of Austria and Styria by King Ottokar II of Bohemia and King Béla IV of Hungary.

² Charles of Anjou (1226–85) became king of Sicily after defeating Manfred at the Battle of Benevento in 1266.

³ 1256–73. See page 167, note 1.

have mentioned before, a son of Emperor Frederick II who ruled the empire for so long.

In the year of our Lord 1266 the Saracens came with a great army from Africa,¹ fiercely attacking the kingdom of Spain. The Christians resisted them; they won but suffered a serious setback because they lost so many of their men.

In the year of our Lord 1267 the Sultan of Babylon² laid waste to Armenia with his army and also conquered Antioch, one of the most famous cities in the world at that time. He killed and captured old and young alike, large and small, man and woman and left the city deserted.

In the year of our Lord 1268 Charles, the king of Sicily I mentioned earlier, went to war with Conradin, the grandson of Emperor Frederick II, according to my information. In the course of a battle he took him prisoner and had him beheaded, along with many German-born noblemen who were in the service of Conradin.

On 25 August in the year of our Lord 1270, King Louis of France and two of his sons embarked on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Many other princes who were keen to recapture the Holy Land from the heathens and give it back to the Christians also followed him.³ But on the way the noble pure king and one of his sons died, along with many of the army that had gone with them. When this man of God was close to death and praying fervently to God, his last words were: 'I shall enter your house, Lord, and pray in your holy temple, and praise your sweet name.'⁴ And when he had said these heartfelt words, God's hero fell asleep in God. The rest of the army continued the journey across the sea, where they were quickly joined by King Charles of Sicily, whose arrival made all the Christians extremely happy, and they launched a powerful attack on the sultan, pressing him so hard that he was forced to enter into a treaty with them, with the condition that he was to release immediately all the Christians he held as prisoners, permit unrestricted worship wherever there was a Christian church in his land and allow preaching to sow the seeds of faith in the name of our Lord across all his land; and that no-one should put obstacles in the way of anyone who wished to be baptised and receive Christianity. In addition the sultan was compelled to pay taxes to the Christians from that time on. When this had been negotiated, King Edward of England arrived bringing so many pilgrims and Friesians with him, that the whole army gathered together numbered 200,000 armed men. The Christians hoped that they

¹ In fact the kingdom of Castile under Alfonso IX invaded Morocco in 1266. The leader of the Marinid dynasty, Abu Yusuf Yaqub (1259–86), who had ousted the Almohads in the Maghreb, retaliated in 1267.

² This probably refers to Baibars, the Mamluk Sultan of Egypt (1260–77), who captured and destroyed Antioch in 1268. The city never recovered its strategic or commercial importance.

³ King Louis IX (1214–70) took part in two crusades: the Seventh Crusade to Damietta in 1248, which ended with his capture by the Egyptians, and the Eighth Crusade in 1270. He died at Carthage on his way to the Holy Land and was canonised in 1297.

⁴ Psalms 138, 2.

might bring the Holy Land under their control, and not just that, but all the Saracen lands as well. But that did not happen; all the multitude I have described dispersed at once and did not achieve anything more than you have already heard because of the sinfulness of the Christians. With great lamentations they heard that, as God's might demanded, the following men were dead: the pope, the patriarch, a legate and the strong king of Navarre. This created such confusion that each of the great lords left separately to go home with their men.

In the year of our Lord 1272 Pope Gregory IX was enthroned as pope. He canonised and eulogised a duchess who had been chosen by the Poles and was very well born, the gracious St Hedwig.

In the year of our Lord 1273 Rudolf of Habsburg was elected king of the Romans.

About the eighth grand master

Lines 15,795–802; IV, 56

According to my sources, Brother Hartmann von Heldrunen was the eighth grand master at this time and died, as we are truly told, on the eve of the feast of St Bernard, which falls in August.¹ With this I will leave this information and relate more of the chronicle.

About the Nadrovian Wars

Lines 15,803–50; III, 175

In the year of our Lord 1274, the Pogesanians, Warmians, Natangians and Barthians had been brought back into the bosom of the pure Christian faith by dint of the damage inflicted by intense warfare, and had all given hostages as a guarantee that they would no longer follow the counsel of the devil and would never again commit acts of desecration, but would remain subject to the faith and the brothers' commands. Inspired and directed by the love of God, the brothers began to turn their minds once more to how much they could extend Christianity and add to the

¹ Hartmann von Heldrunen was one of the two knights who joined the order with Konrad von Thüringen in 1234 and his rise to power reasserts the order's traditional links with Thuringia once more. He took part in the incorporation of the Sword Brothers into the order and is thought to have written an account of it which was influential in later histories. He may have been master in Germany from 1240 to 1242 and is known to have been in Prussia under Poppo von Osterna. He was grand commander (*Großkomtur*) in the Holy Land from 1267 to 1272, during the time when the order lost its headquarters to the Mamluks. He was elected grand master at the age of 60 and held the office from 1273 to 1282. He ordered the construction of Marienburg, perhaps anticipating that Prussia was to become the centre of the order's focus as the situation in the Holy land declined.

praise of God, and in his name they began a war against the Nadrovia people, a few of whom had already gone over to the brothers: Tirske, who was Mandel's father, according to what I have read, and commander of Wehlau, aligned himself with the brothers along with his men, as I have already mentioned, and after him many powerful noblemen with their wives and children, all their property and followers also went over to the brothers and had themselves baptised as Christians, renouncing their idols and praying to Christ, the true God, as believers and following his commandments.

How the Christians captured two castles in Nadrovia and in the area of Rethowis

Lines 15,851–88; III, 176

Brother Konrad von Tierberg, who was master in Prussia at this time, noted that these new Christians from Nadrovia were sensible and loyal, and had heard that the land and its defensive capability had been weakened by their departure; so he gathered together an army and graciously put it under the command of Brother Dietrich, the advocate of Sambia, who invaded Nadrovia, entering an area known as Rethowis; there they burned and looted and afterwards turned their attention to two castles they knew were in the same area. After prolonged fighting, finally, with God's help they gained the upper hand and captured both these castles, which they burned down and reduced to dust, and they took so much plunder in the shape of horses, livestock and property that they were barely able to drive it all back home. Many of the heathens were killed during the attacks and the capture of the castles.

How Castle Otholochia was captured

Lines 15,889–928; III, 177

After this, on the command of the master, the advocate Brother Dietrich took a troop of brothers, 150 horsemen and many foot soldiers who were transported by ship, and travelled into the area of Catthow, in Nadrovia, to a castle which, according to what I have read, was called Otholochia. He placed his bowmen where they could be of most use and with the others he began to surround and attack the castle and to set up ladders against the battlements. Those inside the castle had already heard how bravely the brothers had stormed and destroyed the castles we discussed earlier and began to doubt their ability to defend themselves. The brothers' army attacked them with arrows, blows and thrusts of their lances. Some of them managed to avoid these, while others were wounded and after a short time they gave up all attempts at defending themselves and the Christians were able to go among them at will, killing all the men. They took the women and children prisoner, burned down the castle and left the area.

How Castle Cameniswika was captured
Lines 15,929–74; III, 178

After this the master himself set off with a strong force into the land called Nadrovia and marched through it without encountering any resistance, looting and burning, until he came to a fortress called Cameniswika,¹ which was situated in a good defensive position on the River Angrapa. They surrounded the castle and attacked it with great force on all sides. They were met with valiant resistance, because there were 200 well-trained, battle-hardened men in the castle. The men up in the castle shot at them so fiercely that many a Christian hero came crashing down from the wall. Nor were they felled by the many good bowmen who spent many sharp arrows on them. This exchange raged on between them for some time until finally God guided His own men so that they finally overcame this monstrous people and forced their way into the fortress. Then many people were murdered. They killed the 200 men I spoke about, nor did any other defenders they found escape them; they took the women and children prisoner and took a great deal of plunder with them, so much it would be pointless to speculate how much, burned down the castle and then departed joyfully.

How Nadrovia was laid waste
Lines 15,975–16,002; III, 179

The brothers engaged in many wars and battles with the Nadrovians at this time which I have not described here, because it would be superfluous to describe everything in detail. I am going to pass over this in silence and confine myself to telling you how the wars came to an end. The Nadrovians still had many rebellious people and many good, well-defended castles in many parts of the country, but God saw to it that they gave up their wildness and idolatry and came over to the brothers, and eventually all accepted baptism in the name of God; all except a small group which broke off and went over to the Lithuanians. And so the land of Nadrovia has been deserted until the present day.

About the wars against the Scalovians
Lines 16,003–30; III, 180

When, with the help of God, the Nadrovian peoples had been converted, as you have just heard, the brothers launched a campaign against the Scalovians, because everything they had done counted as nothing to them while there was still work to be done. Note that I intend after this to mix into my narrative some of the events which according to true witnesses happened during the time of the wars against

¹ Now Chernyahovsk, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia.

the Nadrovians, because as things stood then they could campaign against the Scalovians using ships making a detour round the Nadrovians, because the Memel river which was used to approach the Scalovians was far from their lands.

About a castle in Scalovia

Lines 16,031–78; III, 181

The Scalovians had a castle in the vicinity of Ragnit,¹ built in a defensive location on a hill. I have heard that before the brothers arrived in Prussia the Rus'ians had besieged it for nine years with a powerful army and had not been able to capture it, starve it out or burn it by any means. Finally the Rus'ians tired of the effort and the huge expense of the siege and began to question those who were encamped inside the castle how they were able to feed themselves for so long and what they ate. They replied, 'Fish'. They had a freshwater pond in the middle of the castle, measuring 20 paces long and 20 paces broad, which was so teeming with fish that it provided the garrison with a daily meal. When the Rus'ians heard this they quickly tore down their camp and left and the fortress was left standing. Now note a miraculous event: the pond within the castle walls provided many good fish for the benefit of the Scalovians, who were after all heathens, but in the years since the Christians have been there it has only contained frogs. Why that is I have no idea; God alone knows; His judgement is unfathomable to me and the minds of all men.²

How the castle at Ragnit was captured

Lines 16,079–124; III, 182

Brother Dietrich, whom I have mentioned before, the advocate of Sambia, took a troop of brothers and 1,000 bold armed men who were particularly experienced in storming castles and travelled by ship with them to Scalovia, which is situated on both sides of the Memel, and without warning marched up to a castle which was located where Ragnit now is and began to storm it. When the Scalovians in the castle saw them setting up ladders against the battlements they would have very much liked to defend themselves but they were hit so often by the many sharp arrows which flew at them so continuously that all their defences were useless. This became apparent when not one of them dared show himself above the parapet. So the Christians climbed up to the men above them; some also broke in below through the castle gate and they hacked, hit and stabbed until no man there was left alive, although there were more of them than the whole of the Christian army; they took the women and children prisoner and took away rich plunder in the form of

¹ Now Neman, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia.

² Romans 11, 33.

goods. They reduced the castle and its defences to dust and burned all the villages in the vicinity where the people lived.

How the castle at Ragnit¹ was destroyed
Lines 16,125–56; III, 183

Human beings can attempt difficult undertakings, things which are far too difficult and almost impossible for human nature, if they trust in God and put their faith in Him and are assured by certain signs that God will graciously help them. And so Brother Dietrich, whom we have mentioned before, on the same day that he had completed this task, set off with his army to the other side of the Memel and there boldly engaged in battle against a castle which was known as Ramige. And although some of his men were wounded or shot dead during the attack God made him victorious and he captured the castle by force from the enemy, killing everyone in it and destroying the fortress. In this way, by the grace of God, both the castles were captured, destroyed and burned down and many heathens killed, all within the course of one day.

How Labiau was destroyed
Lines 16,157–90; III, 184

When the news of the loss of these two castles reached the ears of the Scalovians, they were distressed, worried and very angry. They gathered their best men, deliberated about how they might avenge the suffering inflicted on their people, and decided that they would put 400 hand-picked warriors on board ship and send them secretly to Labiau.² The following day, at sunrise, while the garrison were still asleep in their beds, the Scalovian army came ashore and approached the castle without encountering any resistance, because no-one knew they were there. Their swords destroyed all the people they found there, other than the women and children, whom they took away with them along with many of their possessions, which they took as plunder. They also reduced the castle to dust.

How Scalovia was laid waste
Lines 16,191–228; III, 185

This evil act of the Scalovians caused great distress to the master and his brothers and they wanted to take revenge on their enemy, so they assembled a large, well-equipped army and marched off resolutely to Scalovia, which borders Prussia,

¹ Dusburg has 'Ramige' here.

² Now Polessk, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia.

and laid waste the whole country, ferociously killing the heathens, many of whom they drowned in their own blood. They put the women and children under guard as prisoners and afterwards brought them back home. But while the brothers' army was still there and on the point of leaving, Stinegota, the leader of the Scalovians, assembled a huge army from the people under his control and with it he set off against them. When the master realised this, he left a strong troop of men waiting in an ambush at the side of the road. They remained hidden until they judged that the Scalovian army was approaching, and then the brothers burst out of hiding and killed many of the enemy. The remainder fled.

About an act of treachery against the brothers
Lines 16,229–338; III, 186

Sarecka was the name of one of the best men in Scalovia. He had a castle, also called Sarecka after him, situated on the side of the country which bordered Lithuania. This Scalovian was very highly regarded, but he did not have a body of fighting men in his area with which he could attack the brothers. So instead he thought of a devious plan for betraying the brothers. He sent messengers to the commander of the fortress at Memel and had them humbly request that he might be so kind as to come to his aid with a troop of his men and give him an escort, because he and all his men were prepared to give up their false gods and obey God's commandment and buy the kingdom of heaven by accepting Christian baptism. The commander must come to him without delay, because it was not possible for him to escape the heathens safely unless he had assistance. When the commander heard the messengers' tremendous plea he was filled with joy and although he could not fully trust the heathens he did not want to lose the opportunity; he preferred to put his life in the balance and enter into this uncertain affair, putting his trust in God for the sake of so many souls. In this spirit he selected a few brothers and armed men whom he wanted to have with him and set off on the journey. When he was almost at the agreed place he encountered a heathen who had been his spy who warned him, giving him the following information: 'Sarecka is being treacherous,' he said. 'Stay away and on no account go any further, because he is waiting for you on the road with a strong force with the intention of killing all of you as soon as you are close enough.' When the commander heard this he was very angry that Sarecka had intended to deceive him with such an evil trick and wanted, if he could, to put paid to his lying, his wickedness, his disloyalty and his falsehood. He changed his route so that he circled the guards that that evil man had stationed with the intention of killing him, came at them from behind and burst in on the enemy with his men, taking them by surprise. They panicked and fled. However, he did capture Sarecka and eight other men who were considered among the most powerful of his followers, and took them away as captives, securely bound. When they were sleeping in their tents on the first night of the journey home, Sarecka, who was immensely physically powerful, burst apart the bonds with which he

was tied to a tree and seized a sword, with which he killed one brother and three Christian men. He also cut off the arm of another man; in the struggle he himself was killed.

How the Castle of Sasova was captured

Lines 16,339–62; III, 187

When the master, Brother Konrad von Tierberg, heard of Sarecka's wickedness he became very angry and, gathering 1,500 horsemen, other people and 15 cargo boats, they all set off and met up again in Scalovia at the castle known as Sasova.¹ They stormed the castle and although it cost them a great deal of effort and took a long time they finally captured the castle and reduced it to ashes, killing all the men they found in it; they drove off the women and children, along with a great quantity of booty.

How Scalovia was laid waste

Lines 16,363–400; III, 188

The brothers pursued many more wars and battles against the Scalovians and it would be superfluous for me to describe them all, so I will stop here. Suffice to say that the mightiest lords in Scalovia, Surbancz, Swisdeta and a third, Surdeta, began to recognise that God had turned His anger against them, whilst He gave the brothers miraculous powers, be it in storming castles or in fighting, so that they always came away victorious. As a result they no longer dared to go on resisting the power of God. Instead they began to give up their fathers' lands and in the hope of settling their troubled minds, one after the other they started to leave with their followers and go over to the Christians, as common sense demanded. When the ordinary Scalovians saw that these people who had always led the Scalovians in their wars had gone over to the brothers, they all went over to the Christian faith and the brothers. The land of Scalovia remained deserted for many years thereafter.

How the Prussians rebelled for the third time and captured the commanders of Christburg and Elbing

Lines 16,401–56; III, 189

When, after great labours, enormous expense and selfless effort the brothers had brought the wild Prussian people under their control and under the yoke of the faith for the second time, to which end many Christians had spilled their blood,

¹ Situated at the confluence of the Jurā and Šešuvis rivers, modern Lithuania.

and hoped that they would remain secure and at peace, another calamity befell them. The devil, who is always the enemy of peace, has contempt for human salvation and attacks the faith, treacherously crept into their hearts and incited them to extinguish their faith once more as they had done before. Goaded by the devil, the sinful Prussian people right across the country took it into their heads to rebel and throw off the faith, all except the loyal Pomesanians; they did not take any part in it. However, no-one except the Pogesanians dared defy the brothers openly. They demonstrated their lack of obedience immediately; they came carrying weapons and captured the commander of Elbing and Helwig of Goldbach, who commanded Christburg, with both of their companions and took them off as prisoners. However, one of them, known as Powida, removed their chains and helped them get away quickly. Their chaplain, a priest, was captured with them. He was hanged and one of the servants was killed. The others who had been captured only just managed to run away and escape.¹

How many Pomesanians were killed
Lines 16,457–540; III, 190–91

At that time, according to what I have read, Brother Dietrich of Lödla, the advocate of Sambia, returned from a trip to Germany, where he had had to go for administrative reasons. He was popular with the Sambians, and when he heard the news he invited them all together for a discussion and convinced them to give up the evil wrongdoing they had begun in the name of the devil. When the Natangians and the Warmians heard this they abandoned their original evil plans and swore binding oaths that henceforward they would be unreservedly true and loyal to the brothers. Then Brother Konrad, the master, assembled a well-equipped army and marched off grimly into Pogesia, burning and looting and killing countless Pogesanians; all the women and children were taken prisoner. While they were engaged on this, they heard men and women wailing over the body of Bonse: ‘Cursed be his false advice, because he is the cause of all the misery and anguish which has befallen us! He is the origin and perpetrator of the great crime of our having left the Christian faith. May great suffering befall him!’ This Bonse, according to what I have read, lived in Sambia and was the treasurer for the region of Pobethen. He was so lustful that he openly kept two wives and because the brothers would not allow such depravity he became so angry that he secretly allied himself with the Prussians and incited them all to rebel, across the whole country, as I described to you earlier. When they realised the truth of Bonse’s devilish act of treachery he was condemned to death, as was fitting for his wickedness, and executed.

In the autumn of this same year the brothers once more initiated an aggressive campaign into Pogesia ransacking the country and laying it waste, sparing

¹ The third revolt lasted from 1275 to 1283.

nothing, neither buildings nor property, and killing all the people in the land, young and old, man and woman. However, a small number of them survived and fled towards Lithuania, to the area of the castle at Gardinas, where they saved themselves and their people from disaster. This is how this area was laid waste.

**How the Kulmerland was laid waste and the areas of Graudenz, Marienwerder, Zantir, Christburg and Castle Clement were all destroyed
Lines 16,541–734; III, 192**

At this time, according to what I have read, there was a provincial commander in the Kulmerland who kept track of every penny and was very strict with his subordinates but kind to his enemies; his name was Bertold von Nordhausen. He could be greedy like the fox, which, while he is grubbing obsessively in the dirt for something to eat, often fails to see great danger like a hunting dog creeping up on him. This Bertold also focused his desires purely on silver and gold and on earthly gains and he was a coward when it came to fighting. This was the cause of much complaint in the Kulmerland, for he did not defend them against the attacks of the enemy with bold exploits, as he should have done, and for this reason the Sudovians often came to the Kulmerland to raid and harry it. They caused great damage and inflicted much anguish on God's poor Christian people, killing and devastating the whole area, burning and plundering without any opposition. This lack of resistance went on for such a long time until at length 30 men, sometimes more, sometimes fewer, could attack the Kulmerland with impunity. All this was neglected by Bertold, who did not care about the guilt he incurred, because he was more interested in the rewards which gratify those men who are not in their right minds. However, his hopes were in vain, because finally the master rightly deposed the cowardly regional commander (that is, Bertold), and replaced him as regional commander with a dear brother called Hermann von Schönburg, an outstanding warrior.¹ He fought back and valiantly protected the Kulmerland, which had been entrusted to him, and every time that the Sudovians came to raid the region, whatever the size of their army he rode out bravely against them with his men and either chased them away or fought and defeated them with the help of God who guided him. He did this so often until he had killed so many of them that they no longer ever dared to enter the land without a great army. The severe setback the brave master inflicted on them and the great losses they incurred because he killed so many of them in battle made the Sudovians so incensed with anger and hatred that their leader, Skumantas, assembled an army of 4,000 Lithuanians and his own people and marched off to vent his wrath on the Kulmerland on the Day of the Eleven Thousand Virgins² and to persecute and harry the Christians, many

¹ According to Strehlke, *Die Kronike von Pruzinlant*, p. 495, he held this office from 1276 until 1289.

² 21 October (1277).

of whom he martyred to avenge his own dead, because he was so angry with them. At the beginning of the incursion they came to the castle of Plowist, on the River Ossa, which was held by a tenant.¹ They launched a ferocious attack on the castle and would certainly have captured it if an agreement had not been reached that he was to be given two guides from the castle who were to lead him wherever he wanted to go in the country, wherever there were known to be Christians in the fortresses. That castle won its freedom in this way and the army set off to the castles of Rehden and Leipe,² both of which they left in peace. After this they went on to attack Welsas, where they burned the outer fortifications down to the ground. From there they turned to the castle at Clement, surrounded it and attacked it. Finally they set fire to it and the castle was burned to the ground, along with everything in it. According to what I have read, more than 100 Christians died there, apart from the women and children, many of whom were taken prisoner, and then they left to go to Turnitz. The castle of this name had been left as an inheritance to a tenant who was garrisoning it. The army surrounded this castle and launched a violent attack on it but the garrison fought back ferociously and the army achieved nothing during its first day of storming the castle. They spent the night there to rest in the hope of better luck the next day, but in the early morning they suspected that the castle was better defended than it had been before, so they lost interest and moved off, marching towards Graudenz,³ Marienwerder, Zantir and Christburg. These dogs destroyed anything they met on the way outside the fortresses. They ranged widely across the country, finding where the Christians had settled. They took prisoner or murderously killed everyone they came across, man or woman. After inflicting all these tribulations, they carried off huge amounts of plunder and many Christians, who were taken off into perpetual captivity. May God have pity on them! What anguish there was; friends wept for friends, children were torn in great distress from the arms of their mothers who were still breastfeeding them! Inconsolable daughters were dragged away from their mothers and were defiled, as the heathens shared the booty amongst themselves. How shocked their friends were to witness these shameful sights. I believe that no-one is capable of witnessing this anguish without tears in their eyes.

About the last war against the Sudovians Lines 16,735–812; III, 193–4

When, with the help of God, all the Prussian armies across the whole country had been subdued, there was one people, more powerful than all the others, which

¹ The order had settled secular knights on some of the conquered territory, especially the Kulmerland, to help occupy the country. Many of these were Polish. See William Urban, *The Teutonic Knights. A Military History* (London: Greenhill Books, 2005), p. 57.

² Modern Lipno, Poland.

³ Now Grudziądz, Poland.

continued fighting the Christians and the faith, and attacking and threatening them with all the might at their disposal: the Sudovians. The brothers waged war boldly against them, trusting not in their own strength but putting their faith in God, who does not abandon His own people but stands by them and helps them because He is good. They were also mindful that a sacrifice is worthless if its tail is missing,¹ that is, that good deeds are of little use if they are unfinished; no-one is crowned victor unless he fights to the end. For this reason and for the wages of righteousness, the brothers wanted to bring the work which was their sacrifice to a satisfactory conclusion, and so they began this process by launching a campaign against the Sudovians with all their might.

Brother Konrad von Tierberg, the master, who had been tireless in his conduct of the war, promptly brought together an army of 1,500 horsemen who were prepared for war and set off against the Sudovians to raid an area called Kymenow. In addition to the many men of fighting age whom they killed during the raids, they drove away more than one thousand women and children and so much plunder that no-one knows the true amount. Since it was a day's journey, the following day they entered a wood the Prussians call Winse with their booty, and there they heard that they were being pursued by 3,000 hand-picked Sudovian warriors. When they realised they were there, they immediately turned round and attacked the enemy in formation, whereupon the cowardly enemy took flight. The brothers slaughtered a large part of this army and drove it back towards its own country. During the raid six Christians were killed; the rest of the army returned cheerfully home with the plunder.

How Poland was looted Lines 16,813–26; III, 195

During this time a well-equipped army from Lithuania came to Poland and launched a devastating attack on the three provinces of Łęczyca, Brest and Dobrin, burning and harrying the region and causing such loss of life among the Christians that no-one was able to count how many were killed and how many they drove off into captivity.

How 800 Lithuanians were killed Lines 16,827–904; III, 196

Not long after this 800 well-equipped men left Lithuania and rode to an area in Poland known as Kersow, where they ferociously slaughtered the male inhabitants of ten villages; they drove off the women and children along with a great deal of plunder. During this time that man of God, the good prince, who was virtuous and

¹ Leviticus 22, 22.

pure in mind and always walked in the path of God, Duke Leszek of Cracow, had assembled many thousands of men to counter the threat from the enemy which I have just described, and make a stand against them. Because he realised that many of his people were wavering in their commitment to the battle, this bold lord left their ranks, went up to a nearby hill and said loudly: 'If any of you here is devoted to God and full of courage, let him join me here joyfully and help me take revenge on the enemies of the cross and the wrongs and dishonour they are inflicting on the body of Christ our Lord. All of you, help avenge this torment and defeat the heathens who are testing us in their arrogance. Do it for the sake of the heavenly wages which God has set aside for all of those just men who fight here in his cause and to defend the faith.' It will grieve you to hear that out of all that great number no more than 300 men stepped forward to join the pure prince; all the rest left and crept home afraid.¹ The well-born prince stayed there with this small band and with them, in the name of the lord in whom he placed his trust and on whom he relied for help, he bravely attacked the heathens. First of all he managed to free the Christians from the bonds which kept them captive. Afterwards he boldly took the battle to the troops of these heathens and inflicted such great damage on them that 800 of them did not live to leave the battlefield, all except about ten men, who chose flight as their way out of danger. All the rest were dead. In this way the duke released the captive Christians from their sufferings and from great bitterness and with God's help put an end to the heathens' contempt.

How the area of Meruniska in Sudovia was destroyed
Lines 16,905–26; III, 197

Whenever he could, Master Konrad persecuted and destroyed the accursed heathens with all his might; now he assembled a powerful army of foot soldiers and horsemen to attack the Sudovians. When he reached that region, he took the mounted troops and, leaving the others behind, he advanced into another area in Sudovia, known as Meruniska, where he killed 18 of the highest ranking lords, and in addition killed and captured 600 people and moved about the area at will, devastating it and killing, raising fires and plundering.

This is about raiders
Lines 16,927–17,052; III, 198–200

I have heard in reliable reports that the Christian raiders encountered many wonderful things on their adventures during the wars. One of the raiders was Martin von Golin, about whom I have told you before; the second one is called Konrad Dywel; the third is Stovemel, and Kudare of Sudovia and Naka of Pogesania were

¹ Judges 7, 6–8.

also among their number. These heroes, and even more besides, took part in so many gallant adventures that I cannot begin to describe them all. This Martin assembled four Germans and 11 Prussians and he set off with them to Sudovia. Entering a village unnoticed, he killed many of the inhabitants, captured a great deal of plunder and burned down the buildings; afterwards he set off for home. When they had gone far enough and found a place where they could sit down safely after their exertions and had sat down to eat their meal, without any warning a group of the enemy burst in on them, killing Martin's four German companions. The others barely escaped, abandoning their weapons and their food and rushing into the forest. This stroke of luck encouraged the Sudovians. Meanwhile Martin wandered dejectedly around in the forest, calling together his scattered companions, and because none of them had weapons or any means of defending themselves, he went back to where the enemy had camped and were sleeping soundly after their exertions and stole shields, lances and swords until each of his men was fully armed. Then they all crept very quietly up on the enemy and killed every last Sudovian while they slept, so that none of them had a chance to get out of bed to defend himself. Only one tried to flee; Martin followed him and dispatched him. In this way God recompensed them for their grief for their comrades who had been killed. They took up their plunder and the enemies' belongings and returned safely.

After this, the same Martin went off on another foray into Sudovia with a small group of companions, taking a village by surprise as planned. The villagers were unconcernedly going about their business; some were eating, some were bathing, some had gone to sleep unaware of any danger because it was dusk, when all of a sudden a great commotion broke out. The Christians burst in on them and exacted a high tribute from them, taking their possessions, their lives, livestock, horses, children and women, splitting up and criss-crossing the village, killing anyone they found who was capable of putting up resistance. In the course of this Martin entered a bath house, and bled the ten unwilling men he found there. After each blow of his sword blood flowed so freely that they weakened and died. After this they drove away their plunder.

The Sudovians also wanted to take revenge for the losses they had suffered at the hands of the Christians and travelled into Natangia with a small army, devastated an area at one end of that land and then left. However, the brothers pursued them in force and separated them from their plunder. Many of the heathens were killed on the battlefield while the others, who were seriously wounded, dishonoured themselves by fleeing.

About Brother Konrad von Feuchtwangen, the tenth master of Prussia Lines 17,053–94; III, 201

In the year of our Lord 1279 Brother Konrad von Tierberg died. He was the master in Prussia. At the same time Brother Ernest who was then master in Livonia was

killed by the heathens. As a result of these events the brothers from both lands sent delegations to the grand master, who was at that time in Germany, according to what I have read. These delegations made their requests separately, but both of them were asking for the same man. Each land requested that Brother Konrad von Feuchtwangen should be made their master. The grand master treated their requests equally, giving this man command and overall responsibility in both their areas. When he had carried out this office with some difficulty for the period of a year, the work overwhelmed him and he began to realise that he could not look after both lands, so he gave up his role in Prussia and kept on his duties in Livonia. So he was the tenth master in Prussia but only held office for one year, as I have explained.

How the area of Pokima in Sudovia was devastated
Lines 17,095–120; III, 202

Brother Konrad von Tierberg the Younger, whom the grand master entrusted with the fighting and whom he gave the office of marshal in Prussia, gathered all his forces and marched into the area of Pokima in the territory of Sudovia, where he captured and killed many of the heathen people and completely laid waste to the whole area, burning and looting. On his return homewards he marched his whole army briskly across the ice on the lake known as Nogothin¹ and did not come to any harm in spite of its being very long and wide. This happened at the time of vespers in the evening. The following morning not a trace of the ice was to be seen, so completely had it disappeared.

About Brother Mangold, the eleventh master
Lines 17,121–50; III, 203

In the year of our Lord 1280 Brother Mangold became master in Prussia; he was the eleventh man in the roll of office bearers and held office for two years.² This same brave hero had previously been the commander at Königsberg, where he had achieved much that was praiseworthy and useful; and after he had held office as master for less than two full years he was invited to the chapter in which Brother Burchard von Schwanden was elected as grand master.³ After the selection had been made and the master was travelling back home to Prussia he was overcome by a severe illness and he died on the journey.

¹ Modern Niegocin, Poland.

² 1280–82.

³ The last grand master to be based in the Holy Land, he held office from 1282 to 1290.

How Sambia was laid waste
Lines 17,151–256; III, 204–6

During the time of Master Mangold the Sudovians were very hostile towards the brothers because they were bitter about the many losses and damage they had inflicted on them and the persecution which increased in intensity every day. They talked about how they could defend themselves against these violent attacks, which were forcing them into obedience, and how they could pay back the brothers and be free of their power. Because they were not capable of achieving this on their own they accepted the help of the Lithuanians, and their combined forces marched into Sambia. The brothers had been forewarned about these events, so they were unable to inflict any damage during the offensive other than by marching around the area for ten days and taking revenge by burning down all the buildings which they found undefended, before leaving. However, five men from the army had to be left behind because they were killed by the brothers. While this army was rampaging around Sambia, Brother Ulrich the Bavarian, the commander of Tapiau, went to Sudovia with 250 warriors on horseback with whom he devastated the country at will; along with the other ferocious chastisement he inflicted on many people, slaughtering, robbing and burning, he took prisoner 150 of the wives, daughters and children of their nobles and brought them back home with him. In this way the Sudovians lost more at home than they gained on their campaign in Sambia.

Brother Ulrich was brave in mind and body. He often did things in the course of a battle which a coward would scarcely dare contemplate. He so frequently inflicted so much suffering and damage on the Sudovians in his attacks that the master, who was concerned for him, was afraid that he might be killed, and he forbade him to undertake any more of the raids against the Sudovians that he had been in the habit of conducting in the past, whether for the purpose of fighting them or for gathering plunder, without his express permission. When he was asked why he was so fierce and violent towards the Sudovians, he replied, 'I am at a loss to know how to persecute them so that I can receive five wounds like the five wounds my lord Christ received for me.' He was also heard praying to God for this on many occasions and he afterwards received what he had wanted: in a battle with the Sudovians he received five wounds in the manner of the cross, as he had always wanted, and he died of them.

How a Sudovian was miraculously converted
Lines 17,257–352; III, 207

At the same time a Sudovian noble called Russigen left Sudovia with his entire household and went to Balga, where the brothers received him and welcomed him, as they ought. He wanted to go into the church with all his people and take part in the holy service with all the others. He was pushed out and shown the door, as was the Christians' right, because he was still a heathen. When he was told the

reason for his exclusion he accepted it and quickly had himself baptised along with his whole household. The moment his soul was made healthy by baptism his body was afflicted by a serious illness and he had to go to bed at once. He sent for the priest brother who had given him the sacrament of baptism and begged him to teach him about the faith, a request the priest was glad to grant. When he was sitting in front of him instructing him in the teachings of God, he saw a wooden cross the Sudovian had had made standing at his feet. Seeing the cross, the priest was amazed that the heathen had become so devout in such a short time, since he had only received baptism that same day, and began to ask him questions: ‘Did you ever,’ he said, ‘do any good deeds during the period of your life before you received baptism?’ ‘In my lifetime I have zealously killed many Christians. I do not know of any good works other than one, which happened when we were campaigning in Poland and one of the Sudovians took a effigy of Our Lady away with him. In this effigy there was the carving of a child in her lap. Afterwards this man and other wild heathens kept on shooting at the picture in a wild frenzy. When I saw that, I was sorry. I ran up to them angrily, took the picture from them by force and gave it to a Christian. “Take this, hold on to it,” I said, “this image of your God; and take it to where it will be given the Christian honour, praise and respect which are its due.” After this the most beautiful woman in the image of the statue appeared to me miraculously in a dream. I have never seen the like before or after. I heard her say to me, “The service you did to my statue in rescuing it from the ignorant hordes will be repaid with rich rewards in my child’s kingdom!”’ When the pure, newly baptised man had said these words to the priest he spoke no more and blissfully fell asleep in God before the day was out.

How Marienburg was built Lines 17,353–60; III, 208

In the year of our Lord 1280 the castle of Zantir was moved to its present site and renamed and is now known as Marienburg in praise and honour of the ever-virgin Virgin Mary.

How an area in Sudovia called Crasima was devastated Lines 17,361–479; III, 209–10

Master Mangold vigorously and skilfully pursued the wars against the Sudovians which had been initiated by his predecessors. He gathered all the armed forces he could assemble together in an army and marched into Sudovia on the day which is dedicated to Our Lady¹ and his campaign reached the area of Crasima, which he laid waste to by burning and looting. There he came across Skumantas, the

¹ 2 February.

leader in that region, and burned down all his buildings. He took prisoners and killed around one hundred and fifty men and women. In addition he brought a great quantity of all sorts of plunder home with him. When his army was about to leave Crasima and enter the neighbouring region, God ordained that it lost its way and became split up into separate groups. These groups ranged here and there and in this way the army so completely covered the area that there was not a single place which was not devastated; in this campaign that excellent warrior, the commander of Tapiau, Brother Ulrich the Bavarian was killed, and because he had always aspired to be wounded in the way that Christ was, that is what happened to him; the Sudovians wounded him four times in his feet and hands and killed him with a fifth wound to his heart. Four other men who were fighting alongside him were also killed. Brother Ludwig von Liebenzell was taken prisoner during this campaign.

Brother Ludwig was from a branch of a noble family, had learned the arts of war from an early age and performed many miraculous, valiant deeds in battle, which this book will describe later. When the enemy captured him he was entrusted to Skumantas. He saw in him an exceptional warrior and brave man like himself and for this reason he looked after him himself and enjoyed his company. After this it happened that Skumantas was to travel alone to a drinking session where all the noblest Sudovians had gathered, and he took him with him as a friend, even though he was a prisoner. During the drinking session an argument arose and a powerful but ignorant Sudovian nobleman taunted Ludwig, disparaging him and threatening him. He said to Skumantas: 'Did you bring me here with you so that this man can shout at me, mock me and threaten me?' Skumantas replied, 'You can be sure that I am sorry that he is annoying you; if you are brave enough to pay him back for what you have had to put up with I will certainly stand by you and help you.' On hearing this he angrily drew a sword and fearlessly hit out at the Sudovian and killed him in front of them all. After this one of Skumantas's servants freed him from the bonds which kept him captive, took him away and brought him back to the brothers.

How the Sudovian leader Skumantas was converted Lines 17,480–511; III, 211

The aforementioned Skumantas was powerful and rich and lived in Sudovia in the region of Crasima. The brothers' attacks caused him so much trouble during the period of the wars that he was not able to stay but fled and moved with his friends, household and all his possessions down to Rus', where he intended to live peacefully. However, it was not long before homesickness forced him to return to the land of his birth. When the brothers had heard this they attacked him relentlessly, as they had done before, and inflicted such damage on him by fighting and all manner of attacks that he finally gave himself up to the brothers with his

whole household and accepted the Christian faith by receiving baptism with all of his men.¹

How the region of Silia in Sudovia was devastated and Brother Ludwig captured once more
Lines 17,512–73; III, 212

It was proper, as I have said, that Master Mangold should take part in the election of a grand master at the chapter meeting, where he died. When he set out on the journey von Tierberg, who was marshal at the time, assembled an army of brothers and many men. The army was so large that it occupied a space many miles across when it set off on its campaign and made its way to the region of Silia in Sudovia. There they burned down any buildings they came across, old or new. They showed their displeasure with the unbaptised people there, many of whom died by their swords, and they also killed the leader, who was called Wadole. They took as much plunder as they could carry and marched off again. On this same campaign against the Sudovians von Liebenzell was so seriously wounded in the fierce fighting that he was left for dead in the snow. However, he was found by some Sudovians who took him, sick as he was, and loaded him sideways across a horse like a sack and took him away at a fast trot. The shaking and swinging stimulated his blood flow again and flushed it out of his wounds, and in this way Brother Ludwig recovered from his injuries; otherwise he would certainly have died, as he himself said afterwards. Since he was now their captive, as you have heard, they gave him to Cantegerda, the most noble of them all, to guard.

About Brother Konrad von Tierberg, the twelfth master
Lines 17,574–97; III, 214²

When Master Mangold departed this life, Brother Konrad von Tierberg the Younger was established as master of Prussia; he was the twelfth to hold this office and held it in an exemplary fashion for five and a half years.³ According to what I have read, he was the brother of the Konrad of whom I have spoken before and they were both called von Tierberg. They both accomplished praiseworthy deeds in the wars which they waged with all their might against the heathens. They were bold and courageous heroes. God was without doubt on their side, so all the wars they embarked on proceeded according to their wishes.

¹ Skumantas later fought on the side of the order. See below, lines 18,374–483.

² Jeroschin reverses the order of chapters 213 and 214.

³ 1283–88.

How castle Potterberg was lost and Mewe was built
Lines 17,598–727; III, 213

The duke of Pomerania, Lord Swantopelk, of whom there has already been much discussion, left four sons.¹ The first was called Mestwin and he had been given up as a hostage; the second was called Sambor; the third was called Wratislaw and there was one more whose name I have not found. Wratislaw gave up the temptations of the world and became a brother in the Order of the German House in order to gain salvation for his soul.² He freely gave his share of the inheritance from his father's dukedom to the order as a fitting gift to the eternal glory of God. Afterwards, when Sambor realised that his share was not enough for him to be able to live in the lordly manner due to one of his status, he went to the brothers in Prussia and gave them his share of the inheritance in return for appropriate support for him and his household in any dispute; the fourth brother did the same thing and in order to secure these three gifts in perpetuity, each of them separately offered his share to the master with the proof of their inheritance, giving it to the order and completely relinquishing any legal rights to it which they or their successors might lay claim to in the future. They had documents drawn up itemising this agreement which they sealed with their three seals and gave to the brothers. When Mestwin heard this he occupied the other three parts of the dukedom by force and held them against the protests of the brothers for many years until the curia sent a bishop, Philip, as a legate to Poland.³ Brother Konrad addressed an appeal to him and lodged a complaint about the crime Mestwin had committed against the brothers and the order, taking by force the three parts of the dukedom which had been legally given to the brethren years before, and giving as proof those documents which had been given to the order. When the legate had heard the response of both parties in this dispute, he began to consider how he could resolve the dispute between them by peaceful means and avoid warfare. So it was resolved that both parties would put the dispute into his hands and agree that they would accept his decision without reservation. When the master gave up his documents and all claims to Pomerelia, they heard from the legate that he had resolved the matter as follows: the brothers were to hold a region in Pomerania called Wanceke in perpetuity and in a spirit of reconciliation all fighting between them was to be abandoned. When this had been agreed the brothers immediately set about pulling down the castle called Potterberg and took the materials and used them to build another strong fortress down on the Vistula in the aforementioned land which the

¹ In fact Swantopelk only had two sons: Mestwin II and Wratislaw II. Sambor II was his brother.

² This was not Wratislaw, but another brother, Ratibor.

³ According to Dusburg this was Philip of Fermo. See Scholz and Wojtecki, in Peter von Dusburg, *Chronik des Preussenlandes*, pp. 229–31.

legate had given to them in perpetuity, and they called it Mewe.¹ The castle was completed in 1283 and remained standing for many years. Since that time it has been moved to its current site.

How part of Sambia was destroyed

Lines 17,728–67; III, 215

In the winter of year of our Lord 1283 around eight hundred mounted troops from Lithuania marched across the Curonian Spit. They reached Sambia, where they laid waste to two areas called Pobethen and Bethen, capturing a great deal of plunder. They burned down all the buildings, reducing them to ashes; they killed around one hundred and fifty Christians and were able to get clean away without encountering any difficulties or opposition. The reason for this was that when the master heard that the Lithuanians were coming he had sensibly assembled a mighty army to mount a defence against them. When they had been lying in wait for several days, the time that the Lithuanians had been expected passed and they still did not know where they had gone; the army became tired of waiting so he let them all stand down. After this the Lithuanians attacked early the following morning and inflicted great suffering on that land, as you have heard.

How the new fortress was built on the Curonian Spit

Lines 17,768–85; III, 216

After this great harm had been inflicted, the master looked at the route the army had taken. It was so secret and secluded that he was worried that in the future the Christians in Sambia would have to suffer the same travails, so he quickly built a fortress on the Curonian Spit which was called Neuhausen,² situated on the sea coast, so that the army would no longer be able to use that route to attack Sambia undetected.

How the castle at Kymenovia was captured and 1,600 Sudovians were converted

Lines 17,786–871; III, 217

Master Konrad devoted himself day and night to wrestling with the question of how he could turn the Sudovians, the enemies of God, away from their error and bring them to the true faith. This issue was always on his mind and so he gathered

¹ Modern Gniew, Poland. This was a strategically important site which established the order on the left bank of the Vistula and became an important town.

² Modern Gurjensk, Kaliningrad Oblast.

brothers and many people and launched a campaign into Sudovia. On his journey he met Brother Ludwig von Liebenzell coming towards him from Sudovia, surrounded by a crowd of men and women. Among them was Cantegerda, who had housed him there and kept him prisoner, and about 1,600 heathens, all of whom he had converted from their error and brought to the path of the true faith by teaching them while he was a prisoner. When the master saw him and the crowd of people, he was extremely happy at what had happened: that he was seeing this brother again and that God had brought about this change in the people, and he courteously invited them to travel into Sambia, where Brother Ludwig was to look after them until he returned. The master continued on his way, launching an attack the following morning into the area of Kymenovia, where he rode up to a castle of the same name and launched such a brutal, violent assault on it that the garrison had no choice but to give it up, on condition that their lives and belongings would be spared and swearing that they would unreservedly accept baptism and give up all the teachings of paganism. Each of them swore this with the most solemn oaths, whereupon the master appointed a guide who was to take them back to Sambia and he himself continued campaigning in the neighbourhood, setting it ablaze. When he had gathered together so much plunder that there were no more goods left there, he turned back towards home. On the way back he was told that the castle garrison had killed their guide and gone off towards Lithuania. But Brother Ludwig arrived safely back in Sambia without incident with his people and they afterwards all received baptism in the name of our Lord.

**How Brother Friedrich Holle was killed with 30 men
Lines 17,872–911; III, 218**

During this same year Brother Friedrich Holle set off from Brandenburg with 100 horsemen on a campaign into Sudovia, where he entered the region of Kirsovia and made off with a great quantity of plunder. When he was returning with his plunder the people of that region overwhelmed him and killed him along with 30 men. The others escaped. During this same battle an armed Sudovian came riding up to attack Brother Friedrich and struck such a hard blow with his sword on the back of his neck that both he and his horse were knocked to the ground. Despite this, as he himself said and as he and many other Sudovians who had also been involved in the fight confirmed when they later converted, they were not harmed or wounded by the brutal blow. I have heard it said of this Friedrich that he was born the brother of Brother Marquard of Röblingen.

How Sudovia was laid waste**Lines 17,912–59; III, 219**

Countless wars and battles were fought against Sudovia and it would be superfluous to describe them all; I will bring the narrative to a close, because all long stories, good or bad, eventually become tedious for everyone. I will finish telling in a few short words how that war finally came to an end. A rich and powerful nobleman called Jedetus lived in Sudovia in the region of Kymenovia, where he was the leader and commander of the local people. When he saw that all the land around had been totally devastated and destroyed and realised beyond a shadow of doubt that he could no longer resist the brothers or endure such frequent attacks, he gathered together his household and all the people who were subject to him, who numbered around fifteen hundred men and women, and left to march to the brothers, from whom they all together afterwards received baptism in the name of God. But Scudo, who was in charge of the Sudovian people, of whom there were still a large number, was contemptuous of salvation through baptism and he set off with his own people for Lithuania, where they lived in disgrace. So the land of Sudovia remains deserted until this day.

About the graciousness shown to heathens when they convert to Christianity**Lines 17,960–18,025; III, 220**

If anyone were to ask what kind of people they were who gave up their paganism and received a Christian baptism in Prussia, and how the brothers who were ruled over them looked after them, I would answer him like this: that the brothers always treated them with compassion according to their status: they treat the noble man with the respect due to his high birth and they leave him with sufficient unencumbered inheritance, according to his status, so that he can live in a fitting manner; from those who are not of noble birth they take the service due, according to their status and the custom of the province.¹ This is how nobleman and serf are treated in Prussia, unless the law has ennobled them or removed their privileges because of what they have done. You should also be aware of this: if a peasant is brave enough to be loyal to the brothers and comes to their attention at times of emergency through his valiant actions, then he is ennobled and made a free

¹ A recent account of the order's history by a grand master, Marjan Tumler, reiterates the fact that the Prussians were relatively well treated, that Prussian villages were left untouched as the order cleared land and developed agriculture, and that Prussian churches existed until the sixteenth century, when the distinct Prussian population was finally absorbed into the general population. The order wrote a Prussian dictionary in the 1350s. Prussian students were sent to university under the patronage of the order. By 1525, 4,028 Prussians had studied at universities outside Prussia and, up to 1420, 80 of them had been active as professors in Prague alone. See Tumler, *Deutsche Orden*, pp. 34–41.

man. Consider the nobleman: if he acts disloyally he forfeits all his status and privileges and must become a serf. This is illustrated in the revolts, during which many behaved in such a way that their status changed, some for the worse and some for the better, as I will explain. Some, who came from noble families, had ancestors who discredited themselves over the years by treachery towards the true faith and towards Christians, so that they and now their children are treated as peasants. In this way they destroyed their own nobility. There are also many who were peasants by birth but behaved in such a way towards the brothers that they have been granted their freedom, elevated to the nobility and given this status in perpetuity. In this way each receives his own reward: evil is rewarded with evil and good with good according to what it deserves.

A digression

Lines 18,026–191; IV, 57–69

This is where Sudovia ends; now we have to take the fight to Lithuania, but before we start on that we should interject some of the history made by great men in many parts of the world at this time, telling the truth as we have heard it.

In the year of our Lord 1274 Pope Gregory X held a council in the city of Lyon, at which he called for assistance for the Holy Land, which at that time was suffering greatly from the attacks of the Saracen; at this council the Greeks returned to the unity of the Church from which they had been separated for a while on a point of doctrine. At this time the Tartars also abandoned their idols and accepted the Christian rite of baptism.

In the year of our Lord 1275 Innocent IV was named as pope and the valiant Rudolf was king of the Romans.

In the course of the same year he suffered greatly because of his eldest son: the latter drowned in the Rhine when he was returning after defeating the count of Savoy as planned.

In the year of our Lord 1276 Adrian V became the bishop of Rome and Rudolf was king.

At this time he was engaged in a violent attack on King Ottokar of Bohemia, whom he killed on the field of battle.¹ Afterwards to bring about reconciliation between them, his daughter was given in marriage to Ottokar's son. He also gave his son Albrecht the dukedom of Austria as his inheritance. This Albert afterwards also became the king of the Romans.

In the course of the same year Bishop Albrecht of Pomesania built the castle and town of Riesenburch in Pomesania.

In the year of our Lord 1277 Pope Nicholas II was chosen. Rudolf was king. During this year the River Tiber in Rome was so high that it was four feet higher

¹ Ottokar was killed at the Battle of Dürnkrut and Jedenspeigen in 1278.

than the altarpiece dedicated to the Virgin Mary in the church known as the Rotunda.

1280 years after the birth of our Lord the corpse of Mary Magdalene was put on show. This was done by Charles, the king of Salerno, who afterwards became king of all Sicily.

The great Master Albert died in Cologne in this year.

In the same year the holy man St Jodocus began to console the downcast with the miracles which he performed in the churches in Pomesania.

In the year of our Lord 1281 a great warrior for the faith known as Martin IV was elected pope. Rudolf was still king of the Romans. During February of this year a live fish was caught in the sea not far from Sicily. The fish was formed in the shape of a lion. Many courtiers came to look at this wonder because it was completely covered in hair: its head, tail, back and stomach, fins, ears, mouth, tongue, teeth, everything was exactly as a lion's should be. It was said, that when it was caught and pulled in, it started roaring and wailing with such a terrible voice that many people interpreted this as predictions of future events, some of which happened. Shortly afterwards the people of Palermo, inflamed with fury, killed all the French people, young and old, man or woman, whomever they found among their neighbours. They spared no-one. If they found a pregnant French woman they slit open her side in their mindless rage, killing the children before their mothers could give birth to them. They committed these blasphemous acts in order to show their contempt for King Charles, whom I have mentioned above.¹

During this year the Tartars travelled east to fight the Sultan and the Saracens killed more than 50,000 of their men. When he had rested he attacked them again so fiercely that they took flight and in their retreat 30,000 of the Tartars were killed.

About Brother Burchard von Schwanden, the ninth grand master Lines 18,192–295; IV, 70

Brother Burchard von Schwanden, whom we have mentioned before, was grand master at this time, the ninth to hold this position. He travelled overseas with 40 brothers to come to the aid of the city of Acre, which at that time was suffering greatly because the sultan was besieging it with a mighty army.² When the lords

¹ This event, known as the Sicilian Vespers, took place in 1282.

² Burchard von Schwanden was the last of the grand masters who believed the order's future was in the Holy Land. He collected men and money to defend Acre when it was under attack by the Mamluk Sultan Qalawun in 1290. The sultan died before he could capture the city, but it was taken by his son, Al-Ashraf Khalil, the following year. The grand master stood down and joined the Knights of St John in protest at the Teutonic Order's lack of enthusiasm to commit funds and men to the Holy Land. His successor, Konrad von Feuchtwangen (1291–97), was a member of the faction which saw the order's future in

who were there heard that he had arrived they came to him in great joy, because they thought that their terrible plight would be alleviated by the good counsel he would undoubtedly give them in his wisdom and he would save them from the enemies who had surrounded them. For this reason the whole population of city, rich and poor, great and small, whatever their station in life, was overjoyed that he had come. All the clerics in Acre at this time gathered joyfully, putting on their best vestments in his honour, as if they were going to a wedding. The townspeople decorated the alleyways with rich cloths in various colours and also many of them courteously went out to meet the master carrying candles and relics in his honour. They met him joyously and accompanied him in a procession with great honour and beautiful singing right up to the house of the German lords. Afterwards the people dispersed to their own homes. Now I do not know what spirit it was which advised the master of whom I speak; afterwards on the third day he held a chapter with all his brothers and in front of them all he unreservedly gave up the office of master. The brothers were very shocked and begged him to change his mind and to continue in the office of master. He did not accede to their wishes and this became widely known, making all the lords very concerned, including the patriarch. He gathered together some great men, princes and their companions, who all clearly asked him in the name of God to change his mind, and not to give up his office to the great alarm of the Christians. When this request failed, the two grand masters of the Knights of the Hospital of St John and the Knights of the Temple fell passionately on their knees in front of him and begged him in the name of God to deign to see the great distress the Christians were suffering at this time at the hands of the heathens and resume the office of grand master, because it was not appropriate for him to do otherwise. But all their pleas fell on deaf ears and he took his leave, taking off the habit of the Teutonic House and going to the Order of the Knights of St John, into which he was received by the pope and with whom he died. However, I have heard that before he died he requested the habit of the Teutonic House once more; his request was turned down because he had left them in such a disgraceful way. Now I will put bring this story to an end and tell you more of the chronicle, taking up where we left off.

Prussia and Livonia. He was not able to implement such a radical change during his period in office, but nonetheless moved the headquarters to Venice, presumably as a compromise between the two factions.

Here begins the war against the Lithuanians**Lines 18,296–323; III, 221**

In the year of our Lord 1283 and 53 years after the beginning of the brothers' wars against the Prussians, when there was not a single man to be found in all Prussia who was not a Christian or who was opposed to the faith, the brothers of the Teutonic House took up the call again and began to wage war on the Lithuanians.¹ The order's land was separated from the Lithuanians' lands by the body of water called the Memel. The heathens are famously well-built, strong and daring, swift, courageous, bold, fierce and skilful at war, because they practise continuously from early childhood. Their country is large, broad and long and they have countless warriors. The brothers took arms against the mighty heathens, and this is how it began.

About the capture of Castle Bisenė in Lithuania**Lines 18,324–73; III, 222**

The Master, Brother Konrad von Tierberg, whom you have often heard me mention before, assembled many brothers and a huge army, with whom he embarked on a campaign during the winter, crossing the frozen Memel and quietly entering Lithuania and laying siege to a castle called Bisenė,² which he attacked ceaselessly from early morning until midday. He attacked it so ferociously that the Lithuanians became very weary because many of their number had been shot and seriously wounded, although they injured many of the Christians too. The battle ebbed and flowed until at last the brothers' strength told and they were victorious, capturing the castle and burning it to ashes. Of the people who were there, some were captured and taken away as prisoners while the others were killed. When the castle was overrun the masters sent a squad from the army to raid and harry the

¹ The grand duchy of Lithuania had emerged during the thirteenth century, based on the region of Aukštaitija (Upper Lithuania). Žemaitija (Lower Lithuania) was ruled by a number of local rulers who were nominally subject to the grand duke. In 1238 Mindaugas became ruler of the Lithuanians. He became a Christian in 1251 under the auspices of the Teutonic Order and he was crowned king in 1253. He evidently hoped for support in his wars against rivals in Žemaitija and to encourage trade with the west. He later abandoned Christianity but was killed in 1263 in a family plot to overthrow him. After several years of disputed succession, Traidenis came to power in 1270. He reasserted the Lithuanians' pagan traditions and ruled until 1282. His successor, Daumantas, died on a campaign in Rus'. During the 1290s the Gediminid clan emerged into prominence and Vytenis became grand duke c. 1295. See S. C. Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending: A Pagan Empire within East-central Europe, 1295–1345* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 49–56. Žemaitija is also known in English in its Latin form as Samogitia. Usage varies in modern scholarship and in this translation the form Samogitia is used, as being the more familiar English term.

² Situated on the east bank of the Neman river, near modern Jurbarkas, Lithuania.

area all round it. They wreaked destruction everywhere, burning and taking away a great deal of plunder. They brought the booty back to the main army and they set off for home. During this campaign the master lost four brothers and a man: while they were riding in full armour they fell through the ice and were drowned in the waters of the Memel. May God receive them in heaven!

How the castle of Gardinas was destroyed
Lines 18,374–483; III, 223

In the year of our Lord 1284 this same Master Konrad, who never tired of waging war against the pagan, brought together a might army of his men. With their agreement he named the Sudovian Skumantas as leader and they advanced on the castle of Gardinas.¹ This was during the summer, so they were able to cross the Memel without any trouble, and when they had crossed and attacked the castle, the master placed the archers in a good position and ordered the others to put up ladders against the castle walls. Then there was such a ferocious onslaught and such killing, that I can tell you it would have been terrifying to watch; the attackers outside fiercely fought their way up towards the battlements while those within the walls resisted courageously, injuring them by hurling arrows, stones and tree trunks down on them; they also shot at them; this did not do them much good because they were also having countless arrows shot back at them. This contest went on until there were many wounded on both sides. But at last, when God ordained it was time, He helped His warriors to break into the castle and conquer it. Many heathens were sent to their death. However, the master decreed that the women and children were to be taken prisoner and taken away. The castle was burned down and when this was all finished the master sent 1,800 men with Skumantas into the lands belonging to Gardinas. Skumantas destroyed this whole region, plundering and setting fire to everything. He also killed or took prisoner many of the heathens; afterwards he returned to the main army with huge amounts of plunder and they marched joyfully home. In this aforementioned region a Barthian was killed who had previously fled from Pogesania where, as I explained earlier, the people had deserted the faith during the last rebellion: he was one of those who had treacherously incited and led the revolt. He had also captured the commander of Christburg and Elbing with their people and hanged their chaplain. Now you will hear what happened to this evil, disloyal traitor and what his fate was. As he lay dead, soaked in his own blood, one of his own dogs came up to

¹ This city is called Gardinas in Lithuanian (German: Garten) and is now in Belarus and is known as Hrodna or Grodno. During the mid thirteenth century it had come under the control of Lithuanian princes and later became part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It is situated on the Neman river and was a strategically important trading centre close to both Prussia and Masovia. Many of the Prussian rebels fled there during the uprisings and it was attacked by the order on several occasions.

him and ignoring the many open wounds he had everywhere but on his left side; he mauled him there ferociously, growling fiercely, gnawing at him and tearing the flesh from his body. He went on gnawing and tearing at him until he bit clean through his body. Then he tore out his heart, which had conceived so many evil plans in its time, and because he was hungry he ate it in full view of the Christians who were rushing around in the vicinity and witnessed this miracle.

About the death of Skumantas
Lines 18,484–553; III, 224

See how wonderfully and graciously God treats His creation and how He transforms His creatures. I am referring to Skumantas, whom I mentioned to you earlier. He had previously been known as someone who had furiously persecuted and killed Christians. He had given all that up as a result of the change God brought about in him, and this hero now fought with all his might for the honour of the faith, which he protected as assiduously as he had previously tried to harm it, and he became a very loyal leader of the Christians against the enemies of God. In return, God intended to pluck Skumantas from this transient life and give him life everlasting; to this end Skumantas was struck down by a fever, which kept him in its grip until he was close to death. He was keen to receive the Christian sacrament, which he was given and received with such intense devotion that the priest, Brother Konrad of Balga was very pleased and asked Skumantas whether he had ever done anything in praise of God before his baptism, which might account for him now being so obviously richly rewarded with the prizes of faith. ‘No,’ he said. ‘I did not do any good before I was a Christian, except once when we were campaigning against Poland and terrorising the poor local Christians; I was sorry to see a beautiful picture lying dirty on the ground, which the wild heathen had hacked into two pieces. The picture was of Our Lady, the Virgin Mary, I realise now, because she was holding a beautiful child in her arms. I picked the broken picture up out of the filth and wiped it as clean as I could with my clothes and set it somewhere befitting its beauty.’ When he had finished speaking Skumantas invoked the Virgin Mary and then went to sleep in God.

How the Barthians were received back and many Lithuanians killed
Lines 15,554–617; III, 225

There were a large number of Barthians living in the region of Gardinas who had fled there from Pogesania after the rebellion they had wickedly taken part in. Some of these Barthians had set off with the Lithuanians to conduct a raid on Poland. This was before the brothers had launched their campaign against Gardinas and destroyed it, as I described to you earlier. When the brothers returned home once more, two Barthians, Dersko and Numo, came after the army and requested that

they show mercy on them and take them back, along with all the Barthians who had previously been renegades, as I described to you, and give them back their wives and children. The advocate of Sambia disliked this turn of events, thinking that their original apostasy was being treated too lightly and fearing that these people would rebel again and place an intolerable strain on the country. He was proved right by subsequent events. Nonetheless things were left as had been arranged; Dersko and Numo hurried off to the army which was returning from Poland and the Barthians secretly informed their fellow-countrymen what the brothers had done to the castle and the land at Gardinas. Afterwards they told them that they had begged for and received mercy for them from the brothers and that all their debts to the Christians had been made null and void. When the Barthians heard this, in their barbarity they killed the Lithuanians who were travelling with them and took their booty off to Pogesania, where they went on living as they had before.

About an act of betrayal in which 100 Christians were killed
Lines 18,618–649; III, 226

In the year of our Lord 1285 there was a Scalovian called Girdilo who had been with the brothers for five years and who had been highly respected while he still lived in Scalovia. This man boasted about the great things they would see him doing to inflict damage on the Lithuanians if they would only give him 100 armed men. He went on saying this until they finally granted his wish and assigned the men to him. He set off on a campaign against a castle in Lithuania called Aukaimis.¹ As they approached, the soldiers in the garrison assembled, as the villain had planned, rushed out to fight the Christians before they knew what was happening and killed all of them except a few who managed to escape.

About the fourth rebellion
Lines 18,650–699; III, 227

In the year of our Lord 1286, the advocate of Sambia might well say with Job: ‘What I feared has happened’,² because the intransigent Barthians, who had only recently begged for mercy, the Pogesanians and many other Prussians resumed their old evil ways and began to incite a revolt against the brothers. They discussed their plans with certain Germans³ and agreed such an evil act of betrayal that it would be justifiable to name them publicly here; however, because of who they are it seems more honourable not to give their names. God will judge them. Now

¹ The Lithuanian fortress of Aukaimis, which was situated on the River Ančia near the modern village of Batakiai, Lithuania.

² Job 3, 25.

³ Dusburg has ‘some men from Prussia’, ‘*ceteri de Prussia*’. *Chronica* III, 227.

I will relate how they intended to carry out the betrayal: they intended to invite the prince of Rügen¹ to Prussia with a big army and to help him to drive out the brothers by force, making him their overlord. This would have happened, had God not prevented it by causing them to regret the plan and make known their intention. This happened while the brothers were building the castle of Ragnit. Those involved in inciting the revolt were punished according to their guilt.

How 70 noblemen were killed in an ambush
Lines 18,700–811; III, 228–9

During the same year a Lithuanian called Peluse left Lithuania to go to Königsberg in Sambia. This man had been terrorised by a local princeling, of whom there are many in Lithuania.² This one was second only to the king in terms of power. As I have said, this prince had made the first man very angry and bitter by his unreasonable demands, so he came to the commander of Königsberg asking for help to take revenge, which was directed against Lithuania, for the trouble he had caused him. Martin von Golin and his comrades Konrad the Devil and Stovemel, all of them bold warriors, were sent to help him on his campaign along with 20 men who were experienced raiders. Peluse set off with this company; when they had nearly reached his overlord's castle they received intelligence that all the mightiest lords of the land were assembled there to celebrate a marriage. When, according to their custom they had had so much to drink that they were lying around insensible, sleeping, the raiders rushed in and killed the host and all his guests, from the lowest of them to the highest, without meeting the slightest resistance. Around seventy princes met their death on this occasion, in addition to the many other people who were with them. When the slaughter was over they woke up the bride and bridegroom very roughly with a lot of shouting, bringing them the bridal chicken.³ I wager they would have preferred to go on sleeping if it was up to them, but they had no choice; they had to get up. Their joy and high spirits were transformed into misery, because both of them were put in chains, along with many other nobles, the king's children, daughters and wife and any other people who had come there, rich or poor, noble or common were all taken prisoner. They also took around a hundred horses and a valuable quantity of pieces of gold, silver and jewellery and loaded up and removed all of the household goods. All of these they brought home with great rejoicing and Peluse got his revenge.

¹ Wizlaw II (1240–1302).

² Catholic chroniclers had great difficulty naming the titles of the Lithuanian rulers and princes. The Latin terms *rex* (king) and *dux* (leader, duke) often simply translated 'leader'. The Lithuanian 'kunigas' (originally 'prince', then 'priest', since the two people were often the same in Lithuania) was also often confused with the German *könig* (king). See Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, pp. 65–6.

³ A traditional wedding gift for the nobility.

This same Martin von Golin I talked about before set off once more on a raid into Lithuania with a small number of companions, and after the bold man had succeeded in crossing three flooded regions he finally reached the Bug (as a river there is known). There he saw a ship sailing downstream heavily laden with merchants' goods. He followed it secretly and in the evening the sailors stopped, had a meal and went to sleep after their day's work. When they had lain down and were all fast asleep Martin and his companions fell on them savagely, put all the heathens to death and joyfully took over the ship which they sailed downriver to the city of Thorn. There they sold all the goods along with the ship. Each of them took away a very handsome 20 marks as his share in this expedition.

**About the spirituality of the brothers' lives at Königsberg
Lines 18,812–991; III, 230–32¹**

From the early days when the convent in the castle at Königsberg was founded, the brothers there have worked far harder at their spiritual duties than others elsewhere. They were conscientious monks in their worship, vigils and kneeling in prayer and yet they attacked the heathens with the courage of knights in the fearless battle they waged against them. One of these was Brother Albrecht von Meissen, the commander of the castle and a great but modest warrior for God. He led an angelic life on earth, perfect in every virtue. In his youth the devil had used his tricks to arouse in him the desires of the flesh, which consumed him and caused him great distress, but God's pure warrior resisted with all his might, reining in his desires by starving himself and by other means both day and night. At the same time he often used to call on God in prayer to free him and relieve the distress the devil's wickedness inflicted on him with such terrible torture. On one occasion it happened that the devil tormented him so much that he seldom had any rest from it, and it caused him such anguish that he cried with his whole heart to heaven for help, which then came to him from God. He heard a voice speaking clearly to him: 'Albrecht, Albrecht, listen: if you want to drive off the devil and escape the temptation of the flesh you must speak these words constantly, without interruption, every day: "O supreme love, give me righteous thoughts and pure desire in my heart, so that I long for you; give me a life without sinfulness, make my conscience clear and release me by your salvation from the sins of the flesh."' And when he dedicated himself to constantly praying this prayer, the fire of temptation which had tormented him so ferociously, urging him to wickedness, was extinguished, and he was never again tempted in mind or body by violent lustful urges.

This Brother Albrecht, the elect servant of God, was struck down by an illness so severe that it destroyed all the hair on his head as well as his brows and his

¹ In Strehlke's edition (SRP, vol. 1), from which the line numbers are taken, the numbers 18,900–999 are used twice. The total length of the poem is therefore 27,838, not 27,738.

beard. It made him look so deformed and terrible that no-one wanted to join him at meals or be with him on any of the other usual occasions. This made the virtuous man very sad and, in the goodness of his heart, he tearfully begged God either to remove this source of shame or to remove him from his life on earth. See how God cared for this deserving man. That same night when he had gone to bed after saying his prayers he woke up again, and to his great amazement felt his hair, which had been taken away from him, had returned so completely to his head, his brows and his beard that no-one could find any remaining bald spot anywhere on his body. I wish that this miracle would also happen to poor me. I would stroke my curls and mock the other bald men when, as often happens, the wind blows their hats off in front of the ladies. My, I would be haughty, seeing their bald brows while my own hair was luxuriant and curly! That is enough of this digression.

Some time afterwards Brother Albrecht had to leave with other brothers on a campaign against the heathen armies. This was at the time when the brothers usually received the mass in the name of Jesus Christ, so they were unable to do this. This caused his pure heart much grief and in his pain he left the others so that he could not be disturbed and gave vent to his distress, lamenting tearfully that he needed this consolation. Sighing, he prayed, 'O dear Lord Jesus Christ, if I were at home at this time I would have made my peace with you in ardent prayer and today, along with all the other blessed companions, would have received your body and blood, whose gracious flow would have refreshed and enlightened my soul and brought me the great consolation of which I, poor man, have great need. O sweet God let my desire be an offering to you today, since I am not able to participate, as you know, Lord, and send me your Holy Ghost.' As soon as he had spoken these words he saw a communion wafer hovering in the air in front of his mouth, just like the sacramental bread which the priest takes in the name of God and transforms into the body of Christ. This sight both terrified and overjoyed the brother and hesitatingly he said: 'O Christ, my dear Lord, if this is truly your body, then let it bring its benefits to my soul.' Then he opened his mouth and the wafer immediately entered. He received it with great joy, praising his gracious God whose loving command had sent him the true heavenly nourishment in this way.

About another brother **Lines 18,992–43; III, 233**

According to what I have heard, the Saxon Brother Wolfram was living in the monastery at Königsberg at the same time. He was a warrior deserving of praise in the sight of God because he led a pure life. When he entered the Teutonic Order and became a brother he aimed for higher and higher levels of virtue, as good men do, until when he was at the pinnacle of blessedness the devil came to hate him, because he is against all goodness, and thought up a devilish ploy to make him begin to deviate from his path and take away his courage. He devoted all his energies to this end. So during the first night, when Brother Wolfram got up

to pray, the devil appeared to him in a monstrous form intending to scare him and disturb his prayers. However, he was unaffected. The devil kept this up for a whole year, appearing to him every night in various guises and trying to upset him in many ways. In the end, the warrior Wolfram won the contest because the devil could not upset him or make him deviate from the service of our Lord. Towards the end of the year, when the enemy realised that all his devious trickery could not disrupt the pure man's constancy and virtuous endeavour, he gave up, disappeared and did not ever appear to him again.

This is about Brother Meinhard, the thirteenth master of Prussia
Lines 18,944–67; III, 234

Brother Meinhard von Querfurt, a Saxon by birth, was the thirteenth master in Prussia and held office for eleven years.¹ His achievements, which I will describe, demonstrate how honourably he held this office. He was very courageous and so ferocious towards the enemy that many of them were very fearful. He made his opponents so afraid of him that they sued for peace with him, if he would agree, because neither strong fortresses nor great distance could protect them from his terrible vengeance.

How Ragnit and the castle at Schalauerburg were built
Lines 18,968–19,017; III, 235

In the year of our Lord 1289 this same Master Meinhard turned his attention to how to strengthen Christianity in Prussia, to spread the faith and safeguard the land for those who had already converted to Christianity. He assembled his army and marched in force to Scalovia on St George's Day² and built a strong fortress which he called Landshut to the glory of God on a hill on the shores of the Memel. It is still standing to this day, but its name has been forgotten because everyone now calls it Ragnit. It takes its name from the river which flows beneath it. When he had finished building the castle the master selected 40 good brothers from the army and left them to defend the fortress, making the valiant Austrian Bertold Brühaven its commander and putting him in charge of them. In addition he left 100 armed men and then he left. Not long afterwards the master set off once more on a campaign with some people to build another fortified house downstream on the Memel which was known as the Schalauerburg,³ and this was where the Scalovians with their wives and children used to live in those days.

¹ 1288–99.

² 23 April.

³ Also known as Tilsit and now Sovetsk, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia.

**About Brother Bertold Brühaven, the commander of Königsberg
Lines 19,018–103; III, 236**

When the god-fearing Brother Bertold Brühaven had been in charge of the fortress at Ragnit for some time, the master ordered him to take charge of the castle at Königsberg, which he did very conscientiously. Many wonderful stories are told of this man's life and his virtues, but in particular about his chastity. From the beginning of the time when God was persuading him to give up the world and devote his life to God he was very conscious of the elements which go to make up the spiritual life and thought them over, weighing up whether or not he was capable of carrying them out. After long consideration, he decided that poverty and obedience were tolerable, but chastity terrified him, because no-one can ever live chastely unless God makes it possible. He decided to find out in advance whether he would be capable of withstanding this way of life; he tried an amazing experiment with temptation. He chose a gentle, well brought-up young girl, whose beauty was unequalled in that region, and he lay naked in bed with her virtually every night. This went on for a full year and yet, as the girl later swore on oath, and as was proved by the physical signs of her virginity, he had not deflowered her or ever treated her immodestly, but had left her as he found her. These events are wonderful and miraculous. God gave Samson great strength, King David holiness, Solomon wisdom, but that was not enough to save them in their day: they were defeated by feminine wiles which made them do evil and laid them low. This brother, however, freely sought out the company of a woman and yet abstained from sinful contact with her. For this reason, if I dared, I would say that he was holier than David, much stronger than Samson and much wiser than Solomon in his conduct and worthy of great praise. Only when the warrior had established to his own satisfaction that he could withstand the lure of the impure life did he join the order and go to the place I mentioned earlier.

**How Sambia was devastated
Lines 19,104–133; III, 237**

During the autumn of the same year the king of Lithuania set off with 8,000 horsemen against Sambia, and rode through it from top to bottom without encountering any opposition, burning all the crops and buildings. Nonetheless, they captured or killed very few people and carried off very little plunder because the brothers' intelligence had ensured that there was advance warning of their arrival. After Sambia had been subjected to this attack for 14 days they returned home, but they did not take back every one they had brought with them, because Brother Heinrich von Dobin and his armed men killed 80 of the Lithuanians in addition to those who were picked off piecemeal during the campaign.

How Castle Kolainiai was stormed
Lines 19,134–95; III, 238

In the year of our Lord 1290, on St George's Day, Master Meinhard besieged a castle in Lithuania called Kolainiai¹ with 500 horsemen and 2,000 men who arrived by ship. The assault on the castle was carried out by these men, while the horsemen were sent out into the enemy's land as look-outs. The castle's defence was led by the leader of the Lithuanians, called Surminas; he commanded 120 men, all brave warriors who put up a spirited defence against the attacking Christians, who were pressing them hard. The battle between them went on until all the garrison had been wounded, many very seriously, and they were in such dire straits that their blood could be seen flowing from the battlements like floodwater. When the fighting had gone on until evening, the horsemen who had tirelessly carried out guard duty during the day came clattering up with a great deal of noise. The ordinary people were so frightened by the noise and clamour that they abandoned the assault and to a man took flight to the ships because they thought the Lithuanians were coming, and however often the master called them back, they refused to come. He had to abandon the attack and return home without having gained a victory. However, Surminas had had such a fright that not long afterwards he deserted the castle with all his men, swearing on the name of his gods that he would never again allow himself to be subjected to an attack by the brothers in any castle as long as he lived.

How Brother Erneko, the commander of Ragnit, was killed
Lines 19,195–275; III, 239

Immediately after these events, on the orders of the master, Brother Erneko, the commander of Ragnit, set out on a campaign to Lithuania, taking with him a troop of 25 armed men and a brother called Johannes von Wien. They travelled up the Memel river by ship with the intention of capturing a Lithuanian who could give him more information on the lie of the land. When they were sailing past Kolainiai the garrison commander, Surminas, called together his men and together they considered many ways of tricking the brothers into coming onto land where they could kill them. After they had debated various ploys they finally decided that they would dress a man who could speak Polish in a woman's clothes and make him look as if he were a Christian woman who had been taken prisoner, and that he would go to the riverbank and beg the brothers in God's name, that if they came back, they would take him and free him from Lithuanian captivity. One of the Lithuanians, known as Nodam, who according to what I have read

¹ Jeroschin: Kalaine; Lithuanian: Kolainiai or Kolainių Castle, situated in the area of present day Jubarkas. This was another of the line of frontier fortresses and was situated on the north bank of the Neman river to the east of Bisenė.

afterwards became a Christian and ended his days in the faith, took charge of this matter, selecting 60 men, taking them to a secret hiding place which suited his purposes, and setting up the false woman on the shore. Shortly afterwards, when the commander had completed his business and they were returning, the conspirator called out to them, wailing pitifully and tearfully, and said: 'O noble knights of God, be true to His commands and take me in, a poor woman, release my soul from its misery and the bonds of the devil, this soul which the good Lord Christ himself redeemed with his blood.' When brother Erneko heard this lament, his heart went out to her in mercy and he brought the ship in close, intending to pick her up; this decision cost him dear. When they reached the bank and threw out a rope the traitor grabbed hold of it and held on to it firmly. Then all the men who had been hiding rushed up to the trap and killed all the Christians.

How 25 Lithuanians were killed
Lines 19,276–337; III, 240

This Christian defeat increased the Lithuanians' desire to attack the brothers at Ragnit even more, as became apparent afterwards; 36 men set off from the castle at Aukaimis and went off fearlessly to Ragnit to attack and plunder it. But as they approached it they became very afraid; being nervous they cast lots, as is their habit, to find out how the attack would prosper. The dice fell badly for them, so they hurriedly retreated. In the meantime, however, the brothers at Ragnit had positioned look-outs at intervals along the tracks leading to the enemy, and when one of them got wind of this raid he told the news to the brothers at the castle, who were still toiling under great difficulty and mourning the death of their commander and the others who had been killed earlier, as you have heard. All this grief made them so angry that if at all possible they wanted revenge on their enemies. The brother known as Ludwig von Liebenzell leapt to his feet and set off after them along the path they had taken, along with Brother Marquard von Röblingen. They also took with them two courageous brothers and 26 armed men, with whom they pursued them through scrub and forest until they finally caught up with them in an open field. There they hacked down 25 of the troop of Lithuanians; the others made good their escape.

How 500 Lithuanians died
Lines 19,338–493; III, 241–2

During this same period one devious and daring Lithuanian called Jesbuto put together a force of 500 of the best battle-hardened men he could find and led them into the border region of Poland, where, because of the strength of his troop, he was able to inflict great losses on the Christians and carry off large quantities of plunder in the form of people and property. Although this Jesbuto lived with the

heathens and was officially one of their number, in secret he was at this time an ally of the brothers and had given them advance notice of the raid and where he would take his army. The master heard of this and sent Brother Heinrich Zuckschwert with 29 brothers and 1,200 men to block the enemy's way at a pre-arranged spot in the wilderness; they duly went there and set up camp with the aim of trapping the enemy between the waters of the Lyck¹ and Narew river. They thought the enemy would arrive quite soon but it turned out otherwise; they had to wait in their ambush for eight days, suffering greatly from impatience and a lack of food, since they had used up all their supplies. At last Jesbuto arrived with his army, on the look-out for danger. When they were close to the spot where the ambush had been set, I do not know if a bird flew towards them or if the devil caught the leading Lithuanian's attention, but he wanted to see how the dice would fall, and they fell so badly for him that he immediately shouted to the people around him, 'Woe to us all, we are all going to die.' This made his captain angry and he told him to be quiet; he refused and kept on shouting the same words again and again until suddenly the brothers launched their attack from their position in the ambush and killed 350 of them on the spot; the others barely managed to escape and few of those reached home: many of them suffered such great privations in that wilderness that they hanged themselves; others became lost in the desolate country and died of hunger on the long road, so that nearly all of them perished.

Master Meinhard was seriously concerned about the brothers and their army because they had not returned by the day he had arranged and he had had no word of them. He was worried about this, as well as distressed about the loss of the commander of Ragnit, who had been killed by the heathens. While he was meeting his advisors about these concerns and considering various other issues which were causing serious problems for the brothers in many other areas, he became increasingly anxious, and while they were all appealing to God a messenger came in. He began to describe how the brothers at Ragnit had killed 25 enemy raiders. While he was still finishing his account another rushed in announcing the arrival of the brothers and a victory they had won over their enemy, many of whom they had killed in the battle; and before he had finished speaking a third one came in who had come from abroad. He gave the master a letter which contained the news of the death of a mighty prince who had always wanted to drive out the brothers and install himself as the ruler of Prussia.² When the master and his companions heard all these items of news, one good, the next better and the last one best of all, all their concern evaporated and they were jubilant, so much so that many a tear fell on many a grey beard: just as heat melts the ice and makes the water flow again, so the transition from such terrible anxieties to such great joy caused tears of joy to flow from their hearts. They also gave great praise to their faithful God, who, through all their difficulties, always sends His own people the consolation of

¹ Modern Elk, Poland.

² This probably refers to Wizlaw II of Rügen, mentioned above, although he did not die until 1302.

His wonderful help and saves them from all difficulties. The brothers' troubles and woes were transformed into rejoicing, for which the Lord be praised.

How the castle at Kolainiai was burned down and the area of Junigeda laid waste

Lines 19,494–519; III, 243

In the year of our Lord 1291 on the Day of our Lady known as Candlemas,¹ Brother Bertold Brühaven, that ever reliable warrior for God, took 1,500 brothers and armed men and set off with them into Lithuania. On his way there he found that the castle of Kolainiai was empty. The hero burned it to the ground and carried on with his journey until he reached the area called Junigeda,² which he attacked ferociously, burning and looting it and also killing or taking prisoner approximately 700 heathen men and women.

How the castle at Junigeda was built and the fortress at Medraba captured

Lines 19,520–45; III, 244

Afterwards, at Easter of the same year the Lithuanians built a fortress in the aforementioned area of Junigeda, which they also named Junigeda after the district in which it stood. When Brühaven became aware of this he put together an army of 1,000 men with which he intended to disrupt the building work, but he met with too much opposition on account of the large number of defenders and he was not able to realise his goal. So that the campaign was not entirely fruitless, he left there and went to the castle at Medraba, which had earlier inflicted great damage on the Christians, and stormed it relentlessly until he captured it from the control of the enemy, killing or taking prisoner everyone he found there. Having achieved this he burned down the castle and returned home.

How Brother Gerhard was converted

Lines 19,550–623; III, 245

I have heard reliably that in the same year Gerhard became a brother in the Teutonic Order at Marienburg. This is what I have heard: before he joined the order he was one of the bold margrave of Brandenburg's men, and had the reputation of being very skilled at joinery and the construction of siege machinery. After he

¹ 2 February.

² Junigeda is thought to be the area where the fortress known first as Junigeda, and from the early fourteenth century as Veliuona, was built. It was situated on the Neman river downstream from Kolainiai.

had made many of these machines, which had helped storm and destroy many castles and towns, one night when he was in bed unable to sleep he saw four men enter through a locked door and walk up to his bed, each of them with a burning candle in his hand. These four stood around him and reminded him of the many sins he had committed against God. They gave him a deadline by which he must improve his life or else they warned him that he would certainly be struck down by God's anger, die in body and soul and be lost for all eternity. As a sign of this they held out a rectangular white sheet which they stretched over him as you would over a corpse. With that they disappeared, but the sheet stayed over him. This episode scared Gerhard so much that he at once decided to go to Prussia for the sake of his soul, taking the sheet with him, and to take the oath to join the order at Marienburg. In his new life he dedicated himself to worshipping God until he became virtuous and remained so, leading a holy life which was pleasing to God, without backsliding, until his death.

How Pastovia and Gesovia were laid waste
Lines 19,624–71; III, 246

In the same year Brother Meinhard, the master, who was always ready to do battle, took 100 brothers and a large army of followers and led relentless campaigns against the people of Lithuania, attacking and burning the areas of Gesovia and Pastovia. They were so deserted that he found very little that was worth capturing, killing or taking away with him. On the return home the Lithuanians followed him with a powerful army and began attacking the brothers. Among the robbers attacking them was Jesbuto, who had formerly been an ally of the brothers but had now turned against them. When he was in range he left the others and attacked Brother Heinrich Zuckschwert, wounding his horse. This distressed and angered the brother, who set off after him and attacked him, running him through with a spear. When Jesbuto realised he was mortally wounded he wanted revenge, but he was too badly hurt to turn round. Nonetheless he lashed out wildly. One of the blows landed so as to hack off one of Zuckschwert's fingers. That was how the battle between them ended.

About the devastation of the region of Aukaimis
Lines 19,672–735; III, 247

In the same year, on the festival of the apostles St Peter and St Paul, Brother Heinrich Zuckschwert, who was then commander at Balga, according to what I have read, took 1,500 horsemen and 20 brothers and covertly entered Lithuania, where he set an ambush at the castle of Junigeda, hiding himself and all of his men and only allowing the banner of Ragnit to ride up to the castle, which was manned by Lithuanians from other parts of the country. They were angry that

these men dared come so close and ran after them to attack them. The brothers would have killed many of the Lithuanians if the others, who were hidden, had not come out of their hiding place too soon. The Lithuanians hurried away, and as the raid had not turned out as they had hoped, the brothers withdrew to a place where they could set up camp and consulted among themselves about what to do. They finally agreed that they did not want to return empty handed so they launched another attack against the area around the fortress at Aukaimis, where they killed or captured many of the unbelievers and accumulated a great quantity of plunder before leaving. Because all the horsemen there had rushed off to Junigeda the day before in response to the uproar there about the attack, the only Lithuanians who followed the Christians were on foot. They planned to block the tracks through the forests, but the brothers were so courageous that they broke through the barricades and eventually encountered the enemy on an open area of heath, where they killed 12 of them and left them there. The others thought better of pursuing the army any further and returned home.

How Poland was raided **Lines 19,736–81; III, 248**

In the same year King Pukuveras of Lithuania¹ sent his son Vytenis with a large army into the region of Brest in Poland, where he killed and captured many people and inflicted great distress by burning and looting and many other crimes. While the army was raiding the region of Kujavia the two dukes, Casimir and Władysław (known as Łokietek²), were very concerned that they were unable to take revenge for the dishonour and the terrible losses which had been inflicted on their people and their lands. Accordingly they sent envoys to Master Meinhard, asking him to come to their assistance with his men, which that bold hero undertook to do without hesitation. When he arrived and attacked the army the two dukes immediately fled and the whole Polish contingent followed them. When the brothers saw this they too were afraid because they could not fight off the large army on their own. So their troop also broke off from fighting the enemy, but not without incurring losses; many brothers and other people were injured.

¹ This shadowy figure, otherwise known as Prince Budividas, was the founder of the Gediminid dynasty. He was grand duke of Lithuania from 1292 to 1295. His sons were Vytenis, who died in 1315, and Gediminas, who was grand duke from 1315/16 until 1341/2.

² 1260–1333. He became king of Poland in 1320, ending the period during which Poland had no recognised overall ruler.

How the brothers were rescued after being betrayed
Lines 19,782–885; III, 249

In the year of our Lord 1292 Brother Meinhard, who always made strenuous efforts to protect Christendom and to subdue and destroy the devil's men, assembled a large army of brothers and Prussians and went with them to Lithuania. When he and the army arrived at the border a Prussian covertly approached Zuckschwert, took him to one side and said, 'Lord, listen carefully: you and your brothers have unquestionably been betrayed, because when you reach the goal of this campaign you will find the Lithuanians assembled in force. But you should also be aware that if you turn back you will be killed by the Prussians, because they are now united in rebellion.' Brother Heinrich said, 'Since you know these things, advise us on how to escape.' He replied, 'Stop the campaign here, if you want my advice, and return home. On the way take care to carry weapons day and night and be ready to use them. The disloyal Prussians will see this and abandon their plans to attack you.' After this Brother Heinrich went at once to inform the master, and on the advice of the brothers he sent out spies. When he discovered that the situation was as the informant had described and that the Prussians were preparing to rebel, he called for them to return home. They were instructed to carry their weapons; at the same time the master also secretly had those who had been most active in fomenting the rebellion taken aside and put under the constant watch of the brothers, so that they were unable to incite the rebellion and could not escape. The brothers kept them close and watched them day and night, making sure they never left the camp. When the ordinary people saw their leaders staying close to the brothers at meal times, while drinking, travelling or resting, day and night, they became afraid that their plans were known, that they had been betrayed, and the leaders had confessed their intentions. They began grumbling amongst themselves, but they could not carry out their evil intentions because they had no leadership. So by the grace of God the brothers were able to reach home unharmed.

How Poland was laid waste and many thousands of Christians killed or captured
Lines 19,886–977; III, 250

At the same time Vytenis, the son of the king of Lithuania, assembled 800 of his men and rode out once more into Poland, to the great distress of God's good Christian people there. On Whit Sunday,¹ when all the clergy in the cathedral at Łęczyca and other clerics had put on their ornate festive robes to the praise of God and were processing through the town and the ordinary people had assembled devoutly to hear the holy office, the devil's emissary burst in with his army without warning and killed 400 Christians in the church. Some clerics and prelates there were

¹ 6 June 1294.

fortunate enough to have their lives spared and be taken prisoner instead: those he took away with him. This barbarous man laid profane hands on all the robes and vessels used for the mass and sullied everything which was sanctified for use in the service of God. The bread for the Eucharist too, which we use as a blessing and eternal pledge, was burned to ash along with the church in an act of blasphemy. Over and above all this he laid waste to and destroyed all the surrounding area and carried off many men, women and children, to the extent that every Lithuanian had 20 Christians as his share of the booty. When Duke Casimir witnessed this disaster and the terrible anguish endured by his people who had been taken prisoner, he was so outraged that he set off after the enemy as they were heading home with 1,800 men. When he had almost caught up with them Duke Bolesław of Masovia took it into his head that he could bring about peace and reconciliation between them for the period of a truce. I don't know what spirit moved him and why he decided this was possible. During this period the Poles were to be free to go about their business without danger, while the Lithuanians watched unarmed. Vytenis's army broke the truce, brutally attacking and killing them, including Duke Casimir and all of his men, so that not a single person escaped from this disaster, except a single knight who told the others what had happened.

How the Christians were freed from Lithuanian captivity Lines 19,978–20,047; III, 251

During the course of the same year, on the festival of St James¹ which follows Whitsun, Brother Konrad Stange, the commander of Ragnit and a valiant hero in battle, took a few brothers and armed men and travelled to Junigeda. When they were close he sent out a scout to find out how the garrison was placed. The spy returned quickly to say that the whole plain in front of the castle was occupied by a mighty army and that the castle was also manned by many defenders. This report discouraged the brothers and the others. 'Let's go back,' they said. 'This will not end well for us because we will not be able to get away. If we do approach them and attack them we will all be killed because they are very powerful.' Then the commander encouraged them: 'God has often graciously saved his people from danger. He never abandons anyone if only they trust Him and rely on His help. I hope that all of us here praise Him, and if so He will always watch over us. I confidently hope that His help and advice will save us from all snares and dangers; we are scared by the sight of such a big number of men, but victory comes from heaven. So let us unswervingly put our trust in Him and fight them in the name of God.'² Those who were there did not flinch; making the sign of the cross they launched their attack on the enemy and killed a great part of the army without meeting the least resistance; the remainder fled the attack, many of them seriously

¹ 25 July

² 1 Maccabees 3, 18–19.

wounded. So God in His constancy performed a miracle by which the smaller troop snatched victory from the bigger one without coming to any harm. May He always be praised!

How the outer bailey of the castle of Junigeda was burned down
Lines 20,048–71; III, 252

In the year 1293 Master Meinhard, who always endeavoured to enhance the honour of Christendom and damage the sinful heathens, assembled all his forces and during the winter set off into Lithuania to Junigeda castle and laid siege to it, shooting and wounding many of the defenders; however, his assault did not succeed in capturing the castle, only in burning down two defensive towers in front of the castle, one on high ground and the other in a valley.¹

How the castle at Scalovia was stormed
Lines 20,072–121; III, 253

A Christian from Ragnit, a Barthian by birth, ran away at this time and was persuaded by the devil to go over to the heathens. This presumptuous lad claimed he could return the castle at Scalovia to the king without opposition and staked his life on the outcome. So that same winter the king sent an army off with him on the strength of his claim. When they were close to the castle they came upon Brother Ludwig, known as the Ox, who was fishing. They killed him and went on following their guide until they arrived unseen at the castle gates. The next morning before dawn they made such a loud noise by shouting and stamping their feet that the brothers up in the castle heard them; their names were Konrad and Brother Albrecht von Hagen, according to what I have heard. These two and their servants endured great danger in the brutal attack by the enemy, who set upon them ferociously. They defended themselves until they saved the castle, but it was a close-run battle. When the enemy realised their hopes were in vain they burned down the outer bailey and left, but not without having caused damage, because both sides suffered serious injuries in the course of the attack.

¹ The castles in Lithuania at this time were mainly made of wood. The castle itself was reserved for the nobility and guests, while the garrison and their families lived in the outer bailey (German: *vorburg*; Latin *suburbium*), which is also where supplies and animals were kept, and retreated into the castle proper during times of attack. See Tomas Baranauskas, 'Lithuanian Wooden Castles by Data of Written Sources', *Lietuvos archeologija*, 24 (2003): pp. 57–106.

**How the outer bailey around Junigeda and Pieštvé were burned down
Lines 20,122–33; III, 254**

After this, on St James's Day,¹ which falls in the summer, Master Meinhard once more took a large army to the castles of Pieštvé² and Junigeda and launched a violent assault on both of them. Many people suffered as a result. He did not achieve anything useful except to burn down the outer defences of both castles.

**How the regions of Pastovia and Gesovia were laid waste
Lines 20,134–203; III, 255–6**

At the end of the winter in the year of our Lord 1294 the gracious master assembled his forces with the intention of attacking the Lithuanians and campaigning in the region of Ariogala, but this was cancelled because he was advised against it. Yet he did not want all campaigning to be completely abandoned and wanted to achieve something, if God granted him success. He divided the army in two and ordered one group to campaign in Pastovia with the Sambians while the other section set off to the region of Gesovia. Both lands were devastated by fire and nearly 100 men and women were killed or captured and driven off, along with great quantities of plunder.

At this stage we should point out a special miracle. It was the summer time when the cold relents and the weather is generally becoming warmer. The army had been campaigning. When it was returning home, the ice on the Memel was thin and rotten because the sun had melted much of the surface and it was also breaking up as a result of the movement of the water below it, so it was extremely weak. In spite of this the army with all its heavy weapons was able to cross it unharmed. This was at midnight, and in the morning at daybreak there was nothing but waves. This proves that God performed a miracle. This is the same strong God whose mighty command led the Israelite army through the Red Sea on the flight from Egypt without getting their feet wet. The water was like a wall on either side until they had crossed and then it closed over again.³ In the same way God led His troop across this river. May He be praised and honoured always!

¹ 25 July.

² Pieštvé (Jeroschin; Pista) was another of the border fortresses on the right bank of the Neman river, downstream from Junigeda.

³ Exodus 20, 22.

How the garrison at Pieštė was robbed

Lines 20,204–25; III, 257

Immediately after this three brothers were sent to defend Ragnit. They were Dietrich von Esbeck and two others both called Otto, von Berga and Zedlitz respectively. When these brothers and their 300 men arrived at Ragnit they joined up with the brothers there and some of their armed men and went on to the castle at Pieštė, where they got provisions for their own kitchen by driving away a whole herd of animals. They also put a large number of Lithuanians to the sword and drove 70 women and children away with them.

How the fortress at Wizna was destroyed

Lines 20,226–73; III, 258

During this time Bolesław, duke of Masovia was in the thrall of the devil and ignored God's divine wrath, showing great contempt for Christ and causing great distress to the Christians.¹ He often gave hospitality to those enemies of the faith the Lithuanians, giving them shelter, supplying their needs and feeding them at his castle in Wizna, sharing what he had with them and allowing them to use it as a base for raids and campaigns in Prussia and Poland. Even though he was threatened and pleaded with to stop doing this he did not relent and persisted in helping the heathens to persecute the Christians. When Master Meinhard saw how set the prince was on doing evil he was reminded of words which say that someone who condones evil acts and does not make a stand against them is open to accusations of conniving at the evil. He did not want to give substance to these accusations so he took his forces to that same castle and attacked it relentlessly for as long as it took to conquer it. Afterwards he burned it down and razed it to the ground.

About Brother Ludwig von Liebenzell

Lines 20,274–421; III, 259

During the same year Brother Ludwig von Liebenzell became commander at Ragnit. He was a bold, brave warrior in spirit and in deed whenever he took part in an attack on the enemy. With his brothers at Ragnit he now threw himself fearlessly and with great cleverness and boldness into an unrelenting war against the heathens and took part in many laudable battles in many campaigns at sea and on land. On one occasion he sailed with his men to Aukštaitija, which is subject

¹ Bolesław II, c. 1250–1313. He was married to Gaudemuntė, daughter of Traidenis, grand duke of Lithuania (d. 1282), and was in dispute with Władysław I of Poland. See Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, pp. 7–9.

to the king of Lithuania. There was a large village there called Romene. In their simplicity the inhabitants of Aukštaitija considered the village to be sacred. The commander silently put the village in order, wreaking great destruction there, consecrating the natives under the banners of his own chaplains. This ritual of the laying on of hands was sharp against their necks and whoever encountered it was killed, regardless of how sacred they were. But enough of this mockery: He killed or captured everyone there and then returned home. He lost one brother on this campaign, Brother Konrad von Tuschevelt, killed at the hands of the enemy. He conducted many campaigns, harrying Aukštaitija and plaguing them with violence and destruction. However, their neighbours, the people of Samogitia, did not lament their suffering, because the suffering he inflicted on them themselves on his raids was quite enough, and they did not know where to turn to escape from danger. There was one area known as Pograuden which he and his men secretly moved against, hiding the bulk of the army in an ambush and sending out a small troop to rampage across the region, killing and destroying and then moving on. This made the people very angry and they set off in hot pursuit with all of their horsemen chasing the raiders and not noticing the ambush until they were right upon it. Then there was a great clash; some ran away, the others set about them and killed all of the Lithuanian army so that only six horsemen escaped, according to reports, while all the others died. This event so weakened the mounted forces of the region of Pograuden that their numbers did not recover for a very long time. He did the same at Vaikiai.¹ He set an ambush and sent out a raiding party into the region to lure the people down according to the plan. Then the commander burst out of his hiding place and killed many of the greatest men in that area. With strategies like this he tricked the Lithuanians so often that I cannot describe it all. He persecuted them so much with his strength and cunning during the six years that he was in command of Ragnit that he forced all the Lithuanians who lived along the Memel from the River Neris to the province of Lamotina to maintain peace with the Christians and to give the brothers at Ragnit an agreed yearly tribute. Note these wonders and note that however much suffering this Ludwig caused them during his wars, they still liked him, so that even the nobles in the province of Samogitia incited the common people to rebel against the king. They often fought against him so that on occasion 100 or 200 men were killed on each side. He was also able to use amazing cunning to foment trouble among the provinces, to the point that in his day the king of Lithuania could not persuade the people of Samogitia by threats or pleas to fight on his side against the brothers.

¹ Jeroschin: Waiken.

How Brother von Esbeck was killed along with three others
Lines 20,422–497; III, 260

In the year of our Lord 1295 on the last Friday before Whit Sunday¹ four brothers assembled a force of 150 men from Natangia and Sambia and rode into Gardinas. When they were nearly there they took the decision to send the horses back home and continue their journey down the Memel by ship. They killed all the inhabitants in a village on the upper bank of the river and then continued their journey up the river. When the heathens saw this they immediately assembled and ran with their weapons to their own ships and attacked the Christians. During the battle two bold brothers were killed, Dietrich von Esbeck and the one called von Veringen; the Lithuanians, however, lost 70 seasoned, armed fighting men, some of whom were shot and some of whom drowned in the river. After these events the Christians took away the bodies of the two dead brothers but when they arrived near Junigeda the waters of Memel were so low and the flow so feeble that the ships ran aground. The heathens came running up and attacked them ferociously, killing two more brothers, called Henemann Kint and List. Twenty-five men were killed along with them and the others escaped to safety. Before the battle was over, many of the heathens had been wounded. Before these events Brother Dietrich von Esbeck had foretold his death to Brother Konrad Rot; when the latter had offered him his horse for the campaign Esbeck had turned him down, telling him to keep his horse: ‘My horse is enough for me, and the blessing of God on high be on us both, because I am going away and you will not see me alive again, whatever the outcome of the campaign.’

About the loss of the horses at Ragnit
Lines 20,498–515; III, 261

Shortly after these events, on the Sunday before the celebration of the birth of St John the Baptist² a force of Lithuanians secretly moved in on Ragnit and stole all the brothers’ horses and all the livestock. This was very serious but they were not able to prevent it and the heathens drove the animals off. The following autumn the people came back and amid scenes of pandemonium destroyed the outer baileys of both Ragnit and Scalovia.

¹ 20 May.

² 19 June 1295.

About the fifth revolt**Lines 20,516–687; III, 262**

During the same year Bolesław, duke of Masovia, was still furious at the destruction of his fortress at Wizna by the master, which I mentioned before, and did not want to accept the loss of the castle, so he rebuilt it with the help of the Lithuanians. When the master heard this he was very concerned and afraid because he feared the castle would once more be used to oppress and inflict injury on the Christians, so he called for a campaign, calling up all the freemen and serfs living in Prussia who owed him allegiance, with the intention of destroying the buildings at Wizna, if it was God's will. At the same time, before the army was ready, all the Natangians secretly came together and rebelled once more in the name of the devil. This time the Natangians were alone in their apostasy. This is how it began: they chose one of their number, Sabine, to be their leader; the chief conspirators in this wickedness were Stanto, Trinta and Gauwina, and someone called Messino, and many others whose names I will not mention, but I commend them all to the devil. These all decided that Stanto should go with a large group of followers to gain entry to Bartenstein by deception and then treacherously take prisoner the brothers he found there. According to my information these were Brother Rudolf der Lodemer and Brother Friedrich von Liebenzell. In addition, his men quickly captured all the armed men they found there. While Stanto was capturing Bartenstein, Messino took the area around Scunie by force, and left having captured all the horses belonging to the brothers at Königsberg; while these scandalous events were taking place the other army was rampaging across the country, killing the Germans and taking the women and children prisoner and looting their possessions and livestock. Priests and chaplains were treated with devilish contempt and the holy sacrament mocked and desecrated. However, our Lord Christ, who never lets those who believe in Him be confounded, gave some of them such courage that while this was happening they secretly left the others and loyally informed the brothers of what was happening. One of these was a Hermann Tottelin. When he realised the extent of the emergency he ran off without hesitation into the wilderness, hoping to meet the commander of Königsberg while he was out campaigning, because he had set out on a campaign with the Sambians in the area towards Wise. He found him and told him the whole story and how things stood. The commander immediately turned back homewards. In all this turmoil the Sambians, according to what I have read, incited by the devil, took it into their heads to kill all the brothers and those of the peasants who supported them, and to this end had chosen a bold young man called Naudiota, son of Joduta, to lead their army in the rebellion. He was afraid of their anger and did not want to cross them. But shortly thereafter, when they arrived home, he named all those who had conspired in the revolt and they were repaid according to their deserts, as you will hear presently. When the aforementioned commander arrived back at Königsberg and heard the news the Natangians were very afraid. Some of them regretted their disloyalty, released the prisoners they were holding in chains and

sent the Königsberg brothers back their warhorses, swearing obedience and loyalty to the brothers with solemn oaths. The matter was left at that until about two weeks later, when the master decided that disloyalty would lead to further crimes if there was no penalty, so he brought together all the Natangians and Sambians, rich and poor alike, and put them on trial in a court of law for their rebellion, sentencing each to death according to his guilt. This put an end to the rebellion of the Prussian people.

**About the arrival of Grand Master Brother Konrad von Feuchtwangen
Lines 20,688–723; III, 264**

During the time in which the devil in his wickedness had incited the evil Sambians and Natangians to take part in open revolt, as you have heard, Brother Konrad von Feuchtwangen came to Prussia. He found morale to be very low after the rebellion of the ignorant populace.¹ He stayed there for a year in fraternal support of his brothers, comforting them after their tribulations, although the rebellion of those wicked people had been dealt with so quickly. He was a worthy emissary of God in this matter. He graciously gave the brothers magnificent gifts and then left Prussia to go to Prague, where death put an end to his years and he went uncomplainingly to another, better life, where old age needs no support but has lasting strength. His grave is at Drogewitz.²

**About a brother
Lines 20,724–57; III, 263**

During the same period a brother in the castle at Welsas³ became so ill with a fever that he was close to death. While he lay in this weakened state in the arms of Brother Dietrich, the priest in the castle, his spirit left him and stayed out of his body for a long time, during which God revealed many wondrous things to him which he told the others about later. When he came to himself he said fervently: ‘O dear Lord Dietrich, I beg you to recite to me the words of Jesus Christ which we sing every day at Primes,’ and afterwards, when that had been done, they heard him relate this miracle: ‘So that you may better believe what I have told you’,

¹ Grand master from 1291 to 1296, he visited Prussia from August 1295 to May 1296. See Ulrich Niess, ‘Konrad von Feuchtwangen’, in Arnold (ed.), *Hochmeister*, pp. 41–5.

² Drobowitz, near Časlau, was one of the order’s commanderies in Bohemia, north-east of Prague in the present-day Czech Republic. The grand master was buried in the order’s church there but his remains were later transferred to the Cistercian convent at Trebnitz.

³ Modern Wieldzadz, Poland.

he said, 'I will tell you the day and time of my death.' It happened just as he had predicted.

How Castle Kymel was destroyed

Lines 20,758–815; III, 265

In the course of the same year, shortly after the rebellion took place, Brother Ludwig von Liebenzell took a few brothers and 200 men to storm a castle in Lithuania. On the journey the scout got lost and they missed the castle. When they turned back and found it they only found an empty building. The garrison had found out they were on their way and had fled into the forest because they did not believe they could fight off the threat to the castle. The brothers were very annoyed that their campaign had been wasted. Nonetheless they burned down the castle and, disappointed, they left the area. But the good Lord did not want their work to go entirely to waste, but wanted to fulfil their wishes in a way that satisfied them, so He ordained that they came across a nearby castle on the Memel, called Kymel.¹ It was strong and well garrisoned and the brothers' forces had attacked it repeatedly in the past at great cost and to little effect. They fearlessly ran at the castle gates before the heathens in the castle knew they were coming. The unwanted guests ferociously attacked the host and his household and murdered all of them. Then they set the castle on fire and razed it to the ground.

How Gardinas was destroyed

Lines 20,816–905; III, 266–7

In the winter of the year of our Lord 1296 brother Siegfried von Rechberg, commander of Balga, assembled an army of Natangians along with a large number of brothers and set off against Lithuania. When they were approaching the castle of Gardinas they found fresh tracks made by people. Brother Walther Goldin hurried after them, found them and killed the whole troop, apart from one man who escaped and as he was running away came across Brother Heinrich von Werderthau. Werderthau attacked him but only escaped with difficulty because the Rus'ian was forced to counterattack and wounded him so seriously that he fell to the ground unconscious. But Brother Heinrich had dealt the Rus'ian such a blow that he too was seriously wounded, so he took the brother's horse and left the scene. Brother Walther realised what had happened and rushed after him in a great rage. By following the trail of blood which was pouring from his wounds he was able to find him quickly and kill him. The day after this they launched an action across the Memel, looting and burning and killing many people across the whole region of Gardinas. The outer bailey was destroyed during this mission and over

¹ Modern Kelme, Lithuania.

and above the men they killed they brought away about 200 women and children with them.

In the same year King Vytenis¹ set out from Lithuania with a massive army and attacked the brothers in Livonia. When the commander at Königsberg heard the news he was pleased because he had hoped for a long time that the king would leave his own country to campaign so that the brothers could launch an attack into his country. He assembled a mighty army which he entrusted to Zuckschwert to lead into Lithuania to put Vytenis's land to the sword while he was away. Just as he arrived at the borders of Lithuania, for reasons we do not understand he and all the might of the army turned round and went to attack the castle at Gardinas, where all he achieved was that many Christians were wounded, shot from the battlements. Finally, when they tired of the struggle they gave up and returned home, having achieved nothing.

How five villages were destroyed

Lines 20,906–13; III, 268

Immediately after this the Lithuanians went to Kulm, where they rampaged through the area around Castle Golub,² sacking five villages and taking away the people and their possessions.

About the war of the townspeople of Riga against the Teutonic Brethren in Livonia

Lines 20,914–21,059; III, 269

In the year of our Lord 1297 the devil's cunning inflamed a great hatred, a deadly feud and a vicious war between the townspeople of Riga and the brothers of the German House. The devil stirred up and goaded these devilish wretches to such an extent that they were so furious that the brothers had to fight them nine times in the space of 18 months and could find no way of avoiding this. If the townspeople won one battle, God's strength caused them to lose the others and the brothers won. In the year of our Lord 1298 King Vytenis of Lithuania was invited by the rabid townspeople to attack the brothers in Livonia, and he attacked and captured Castle Karkus, capturing four brothers and killing or capturing all their men. In addition to this he caused great damage, looting and burning the whole region. When he made to return to his own country after all this, at the beginning of June, the master, Brother Bruno, chased after him with a small army and engaged him in

¹ Grand duke of Lithuania 1295–1316.

² Modern Golub-Dobrzyń, Poland.

battle on St Nicodemus' Day¹ on the beach near the river called the Livonian Aa.² There in the sand he killed 800 of them in the name of the Lord and released nearly 3,000 Christians who had been captured and taken there. The mighty Lithuanians were enraged at the thought that such a small army was able to inflict such damage with impunity, so they furiously turned on the brothers and swept to victory, killing the master there on the beach with 22 brothers and 1,500 men.³ We commend their souls to God! The Rigans were delighted at the terrible state of affairs now facing the brothers, because after the outcome of this battle they hoped to be able to control the brothers. They invited heathens from elsewhere to help them, and they came at once, surrounding the brothers' castle at Neuermühlen⁴ and launching a violent assault on it amid scenes of great uproar. While this was happening the order's champion, Grand Master Gottfried von Hohenlohe,⁵ was in Prussia. When he heard what difficulties the arrogant Rigans were inflicting on the brothers, he sent Brühaven with a big force of brothers and armed men to Livonia to help and protect the brothers there against the monstrous townspeople. When Brühaven had arrived from Prussia with his army he joined all the Livonians with their arms and together they turned against the people, besieging Neuermühlen on the feast day of the Apostles St Peter and St Paul⁶ and beginning a ferocious battle which saved Neuermühlen from further harm and created many widows in the town of Riga. Many Lithuanians lost their companions there because the brothers hacked at and killed the rich city oxen and the Lithuanian imbeciles in the sand, killing more than 4,000 besides those who barely escaped with serious wounds. There were so many such terrible victories during the dispute between them and they caused endless harm to the cause of Christianity.

How Strasburg was destroyed Lines 21,060–96; III, 270

On St Michael's Day⁷ in the year of our Lord 1298, 140 horsemen from Lithuania burst without warning into Strasburg, a town which had only recently been settled, killing all the men there, including a priest, taking the women and children prisoner and committing all manner of damage, including desecrating the bread

¹ 1 June 1298.

² Modern River Gauja, Latvia.

³ Battle of Turaida, 1297.

⁴ Modern Ādažu nov or Bukultsky castle, near Riga, Lithuania.

⁵ Grand master from 1297 to 1303, he was forced to stand down in the face of protests from the members of the order in Prussia, who wanted to see the order's headquarters transferred there. See Klaus Militzer, 'Gottfried von Hohenlohe', in Arnold (ed.), *Hochmeister*, pp. 46–9.

⁶ 29 June.

⁷ 29 September.

and the wine; one of the sons of whores so completely forgot himself that he defecated in the baptismal font. When they left the area, Brother Konrad Sack, the regional commander in charge of the Kulmerland, followed them and caught up with them in the wilderness, where he recovered the people and captured property the Lithuanians had taken with them and slaughtered all of them, so that no-one was left to tell the people at home what had happened to the others.

How the outer baileys at Pieštė and Junigeda were burned down
Lines 21,097–125; III, 271

While the Prussian brothers were conducting their wars in Livonia, as you have been hearing, and they had their hands full, Brother Kuno, the commander of Brandenburg, set out intending to attack the two castles of Pieštė and Junigeda, and completely burned down their outer baileys. Once he had gone, a brother from Ragnit arrived by ship with a few armed men and began fighting the garrison on land, but to little effect, because the heathens outnumbered them. Nonetheless he made such a loud noise that the army was impressed and came rushing back to fight the heathens once again. One bold Lithuanian was killed in this battle and many wounded on both sides, and then they left.

Of Brother Ludwig von Schüpf, the fourteenth master of Prussia
Lines 21,126–63; III, 272–3

Brother Ludwig von Schüpf was the fourteenth master in Prussia and remained in office for one year, at the end of which death, which spares no-one, took him.¹ His body is buried in the cathedral at Kulmsee. May God preserve his soul! During this master's time, around 600 Lithuanians set off against Prussia with the aim of raiding the country. When word reached the commander of Brandenburg that this army was heading for Natangia he assembled the local defences along with his own men. After they had waited for them for some time and they did not appear, they became tired of waiting in their camp and the commander allowed the men to ride home. At once, the next day after this, the Lithuanians launched an attack on Natangia, destroying and burning a large part of the region, not to mention the other mischief they inflicted on the country, killing and capturing around 250 Christians.

¹ 1299–1300.

**Of Brother Helwig von Goldbach, the fifteenth master of Prussia
Lines 21,164–205; III, 274–5**

In the year 1300 Brother Helwig von Goldbach, who was Thuringian by birth, became master in Prussia. According to the tally he was fifteenth in this office, which he held for a year.¹ After this he resigned and went to Germany, where he died.

During this valiant master's period in office 75 bold warriors left Lithuania and entered the territory of Glottau² in the diocese of the bishop of Warmia, where they attacked a village, driving everything they found there away with them. The uproar this caused was soon broadcast across the whole territory and so Brother Walther Goldin, who was a friend of the commander of Brandenburg at this time, chased off in pursuit of the noise with his company, and overtaking the Lithuanians, they occupied a track which the heathens would have to follow along a narrow path between two bodies of water, where they could not escape. God's warrior threw himself against the enemy and killed all of them, except three who escaped to tell the tale of the outcome of their raid at home.

**How the area of Aukaimis was destroyed
Lines 21,206–223; III, 276**

This same year Brother Heinrich von Dobin assembled a few brothers and 200 armed men with whom he set off for the area around the castle at Aukaimis, where he sacked and burned down six villages, killing the armed men and taking the women and children prisoner. On the return journey the Lithuanians harried the brothers' force so relentlessly that many men on both sides were seriously wounded; nonetheless they managed to carry off their plunder.

**How the region of Dobrin was destroyed
Lines 21,224–87; III, 277**

That same year, Wenceslas of Bohemia was crowned king of Poland, and during the celebrations around 6,000 Lithuanians entered the Duchy of Dobrin and overran it, laying waste to the whole region, capturing and killing the Christians and destroying everything which could be consumed by fire. They also took away the stud horses and other possessions the Poles had brought with them when they fled to this duchy to escape from the king of Bohemia. When the army began to pull out of the area, 100 Lithuanians broke away from the others with the intention of continuing the attack, and attempted to demonstrate their bravery by crossing

¹ In fact 1301–2.

² Modern Głotowo, Poland.

the River Drewenz¹ into the Kulmerland. Here these men attacked two villages and rode off again; the brothers gave chase and attacked them, killing 70 of the Lithuanians and freeing from their chains the girls, women and children who had been taken prisoner and driven off here and in Dobrin. When the remaining 30 men, who had escaped the fate of their companions by running away, arrived back at the army and told the news of what had happened, the army became so afraid that every one of them ran off home as best he could: friends deserted their friends and no-one waited for anyone else. Many horses and men died during this headlong rush home. When they reached the River Narew there was such a crush that in the panic many of the heathens drowned in the river.

A miracle concerning two brothers
Lines 21,288–345; III, 278

This same year saw the death of two brothers at Marienburg; they were Brother Hermann and Brother Friedrich. These two were so devoted to each other that neither of them wanted to live or die without the other. Their love remained constant for a long time. Finally God's paternal hand of discipline struck down Brother Hermann with leprosy. He bore this blow patiently as a sinner; shortly after this Brother Friedrich fell so heavily from his horse that he was killed. When Brother Hermann was told this the following day he said, 'My dear friend, why have you left me in this way? What happened to the loyalty between us? We had sworn to each other that we would both go to eternal rest together; why have you forgotten your sacred oath of loyalty to me now? My life must end like yours and I cannot remain here any longer.' And in spite of the fact that he was not ill other than his leprosy, he called for a priest and received the last rites. As soon as he had received them he gave up the ghost that very day, entering the realm of joy where all sorrow is comforted and all suffering disappears. There he found his friend, who will never be taken from him again.

This is a digression
Lines 21,346–933 IV, 73–78²

Now we are going to leave this chronicle of Prussia for a while and talk about some of the remarkable things which we have heard happened in the rest of the world. In the year of our Lord 1285 a priest called Konrad went to Lithuania. He intended to convert them by his preaching and bring them to Christianity by his teachings, but with little success. When he had been there for two years, preaching

¹ Modern Drwęca, Poland.

² Jeroschin omits Dusburg's sections IV, 71–2, which relate matters concerning the Augustinian order.

and teaching, the heathens martyred him in a terrible manner. Afterwards, I have heard tell, many of them saw lights at night at the spot where he was killed.

In the year of our Lord 1288 a Franciscan brother became Pope Nicolas IV and the bold Rudolf was king of the Romans.

In this pope's second year, in the bishopric of Liège, according to legend a maiden living in the village of Erkel stopped eating or drinking any earthly sustenance and lived like this for fully 30 years. The village priest wanted to establish whether or not what was said of her was true, so one day at the time when she was accustomed to receive the holy sacrament the priest took an unconsecrated wafer and placed it in her mouth. She chewed on it for a long time, testing it with her tongue, but she was incapable of swallowing it, so he told her to give up and spit it out. Then he offered her the holy sacrament, which she swallowed without any difficulty. This proved to him that God was miraculously sustaining this worthy woman without any earthly nourishment.

During the same year there was a fierce battle in Worringen, a village near Cologne on the Rhine. The battle was won by John, duke of Brabant. His defeated opponent, according to what they say, was the Archbishop of Cologne, Siegfried von Runkel and in this fracas 1,300 nobles lost their lives on the battlefield, in addition to the ordinary people who died on both sides.¹

In the year of our Lord 1290 a great disaster happened for the Christians; on the feast day of St Potentiana, which falls in May,² the town of Acre was lost, as the wrath of God ordained; the sultan seized it from Christian control and killed so many of the people there that their blood rushed like a torrent through all the alleyways and this dreadful flood reached over peoples' ankles.

Now you should note what happened in the past and realise that the Holy Land has often changed hands. I have read in reliable chronicles and histories that in the year of our Lord 600, when Muhammad died and got his just deserts, that the king of Arabia was a Christian emperor, an opponent of the heathens and eternally devoted to God. This Christian man, whose name was Heraclius, set off in battle against Khosrau, the king of Persia and won a victory over him, recapturing a piece of the Holy Cross which the heathens had presumptuously stolen from the Temple in Jerusalem.³ Heraclius returned it to the Temple, which he had rebuilt to the glory of God. He also renovated churches and other buildings which this Khosrau had attacked, destroyed or desecrated. Shortly after the Emperor Heraclius had completed this to the glory of God and had left the country another threat emerged to the Holy Land when Caliph Umar of Arabia invaded and conquered Jerusalem and all the lands around it and made the people his vassals.⁴ Thus the poor Christians were oppressed by the heathens and under their yoke for a period of 490 years. At last, however, our Lord began to take pity on His poor subjugated

¹ As a result of this battle Limburg was formally attached to Brabant.

² 19 May.

³ These events took place in 630.

⁴ Caliph Omar captured Jerusalem in 638.

people, who had suffered such misery for so long, and sent them a good hermit, whose heart and mind were aflame with the love of God. His name was Peter and he came from France.¹ This virtuous man went to worship at God's grave in Jerusalem, where he discovered to his sorrow how these sinful people had desecrated and shown contempt to the holy places which should be honoured, and how the worthy patriarch of the city, Simeon, and his people were being persecuted and insulted and were in great misery. When the man of God saw this, his heart filled with pity because he was so distressed by the treatment given to God, the Christians and the saints who were being dishonoured and insulted. He began to consider how he might help the Christians who were suffering so piteously under this wicked oppression. He pondered these things, greatly troubled. One night, when he had gone to worship at the church where the grave was in which God had lain until the resurrection, and he had spent the whole night there in fervent prayer offered up to God out of the pureness of his heart, he was finally so overwhelmed by exhaustion from his devotions that he lay down on the floor and slept for a short time. During this sleep our Lord Christ appeared to the hermit and told him to go to the pope and the Christian princes in the West and tell them about it, to stir up pity and righteous indignation in them so that they would release the Holy Land from heathen control. This was the miracle which his God wanted him to undertake. When he woke up he was comforted and released from the suffering caused by his pity of the Christians and the Holy Land because he now hoped to return the land to God by carrying out what he had been told to do. He went to the patriarch, Simeon. When Peter told him the story and gave him the words of comfort from God, he was so overwhelmed by joy that he wept many tears of devotion and fervently thanked God that He intended to put an end to their suffering. He gave Peter letters and sent him off at once to Pope Urban II, who received him graciously and treated him very well because he was pleased to hear the news. He equipped Peter with the necessary documents and sent Peter off on his task with the greatest possible zeal. He travelled across Italy, preaching; after that God's envoy crossed the mountains and travelled across all the countries, east and west, exhorting the princes, the nobility and finally the ordinary people to cross the sea, telling them the word of God as it had been revealed to him when God appeared to him. He spoke well, encouraging them with such a flow of inspired preaching that he persuaded many Christians to set off on God's journey. Not long after this the pope followed Peter to France, where he convened a council in which he spelled out to the assembled Christians with great compassion the mistreatment and great difficulties the Holy Land was enduring, how God's grave had been desecrated many times by these sinful dogs and how many other places which God Himself had graced and sanctified were now being impiously defiled and mocked. The pope set out the grievous situation with great lamentation and called on all Christian

¹ Peter the Hermit (d. 1115) was a priest in Amiens and as leader of the People's Crusade in 1096 was one of the instigators of the First Crusade, although he did not by any means play as important a role as he is credited with here.

people to take pity on the terrible revolt against God. In addition he granted indulgence to all baptised Christians who agreed to take the cross and avenge God for what had happened in the Holy Land, to take revenge for the crimes which the devil's hordes had committed against the true God, and said they would be absolved from all their sins, because the pilgrimage would replace purgatory. The pope called on the prelates who were present at the council to preach this news across the whole world and this is in fact what happened afterwards. As was fitting, God's word fell on fertile soil, because both Peter and the pope spared no efforts in sowing the word in God's name and they had the satisfaction of bringing forth much fruit to the praise of God in many cities, in the form of bishops, prelates, kings, princes and dukes, counts and free men, all of whom were persuaded to take the cross in the name of Our Lord, and many knights and well-born heroes and countless numbers of ordinary Christians who bound themselves by solemn oaths that as penance for all of their sins they would make the journey to the Holy Land. Peter and God's new pilgrims, among whom were many Germans, according to what I have read, began their journey across the sea in the year of our Lord 1096. They conquered the city on the Hellespont known by Germans as 'the arm of St George'.¹ They also won a battle for the city of Antioch. After this Jerusalem was recaptured and brought under their control. So God was with them on this journey because they captured these three big cities and freed them from the wickedness of the heathens. Over the course of time more pilgrims converged there from many different places and with their help they captured many fortresses and countless castles and towns. Some of these were so well situated and so strong that no-one had even thought that mere men could capture them; that is not surprising, because the hand of God, which grants all victories, was with them and with His help they recovered so much of the country from the heathens that the Patriarch of Jerusalem was granted four archbishops to serve under him. Their seats were at Tyre, Caesarea, Nazareth and Petra, and all four had bishops under their control: the Archbishop of Tyre had four, and the others had one each subject to them. Many churches in the Holy Land were renovated and beautifully decorated to the greater glory of God and innumerable minsters, cathedrals, monasteries, parish churches and chapels were built and occupied within a few short years. A king was established at Jerusalem with princes, counts and many great men in his service. How can anyone fully appreciate the wonders and the might of the many great works of God accomplished to His great glory?² He oppressed the heathens and raised up the Christians. God was very pleased with what He had achieved,³ for all the stains of corruption were completely removed from the Holy Land and good virtuous Christian people blossomed and flourished there as if in paradise, and this beauty softened Him and the old anger which He had felt for His people on account of their sins disappeared and there was nothing left but goodwill. Unfortunately,

¹ From the Latin '*Brachium sancti Georgii*' and referring to the Bosphorus.

² Psalm 111, 2.

³ Genesis 1, 31; Wisdom of Solomon 11, 25.

however, this did not last long, because that old serpent, the devil, who by his cunning had the first man thrown out of paradise, poisoned all praise and brought about the Christians' downfall by making them sin. Since then they have committed many wrongs, defiled the Holy Land in their wicked sinfulness and made God turn away from them in terrible anger, God who by nature is kind, gracious and merciful, and above all good. The stain of their sinfulness and their many crimes so enraged this kind, gracious, good God that He rejected His land and deprived His people of His helping hand; He stripped them of their honour; their good reputation was gone, their strength deserted them like dust¹ and all their wisdom disappeared like ice melting in the heat and their enemies rose up arrogantly against them, killing them at will and striking them down like cattle, taking control not only of the Promised Land but also the land from the borders of the kingdom of Egypt right up to Mesopotamia, a distance of 20 days' travel, capturing castles and towns which the Christians had settled. The land and the fortresses were lost, and among them many good fortresses along the coast were captured by the heathens. When this grievous news became known to the Christians on this side of the sea, the emergency persuaded many kings and princes to cross the sea again and with mighty forces they regained the Holy Land, only to lose it again thereafter. This exchange went on for a long time. God used these setbacks to admonish His people and make them give up their sinful ways. His admonishments achieved little and they gradually lost more and more of the Holy Land as a result of God's chastisement, until they no longer held any strongholds except the city of Acre. As you have heard, this city was captured, subdued and destroyed in the year I mentioned at the beginning. Three factors caused the loss of Acre: one was that the many great lords were at odds with each other and feuding among themselves while they were fighting the heathens. The second was also serious: the pilgrims sent by the pope to help the land had no leadership, were answerable to no-one and obeyed no-one, so if any truces were negotiated with the besieging army they consistently broke them in unbridled chaos. The third factor was the pride of certain individuals, for pride spoils all good things: pride was the lever which tipped the greatest angel out of heaven into the bottomless abyss; pride led mankind to fall foul of greed and brought about the loss of paradise, and immortality and pride also drove the Christians ignominiously out of the Promised Land which they had held until today. Pride makes God terribly angry, particularly with regard to monks, since they have forsworn all pride and their own will. So God's patrimony has become fit for nothing, and is as arid as desert, stripped of all grace. We lament this, God; bring an end to the suffering, as only you can!

¹ Psalm 80, 7.

A lament for the Holy Land
Lines 21,934–22,047; IV, 79–80

O mistress of all lands, o wondrous meadow, imperial plain, site of heroes' victories, noble orchard, field of generous harvests, earthly paradise, how completely your wonders have been sullied and become arid, and been woefully destroyed! You, the Holy Land, you, beloved of God, a source of delight to the angels and of wonder to the whole world! God chose you from the whole world as His bride, to be as loyal and loving to Him as a bride. God's dew made you bear fruit and His presence shines within you. In you, God perfected the sanctity of service, by releasing mankind from its bondage to the old, false belief. You pure meadow, desirable, fertile and pregnant with rich fruit, how you have been damaged! From the beginning you were beautiful; God's blood made you more beautiful and sanctified you. Now you are defiled, your magnificence destroyed, your virtue lost, your sweetness turned to gall and your fallen crown lies broken on the ground. Your great honour and your praise are all derided. O how you have been soiled and burdened with sorrows; God, who always loved you, is now your enemy, He has destroyed your battlements, your strongholds, your high towers, and left them naked like a barren field. God has torn down your tents and His anger has possessed you.¹ How completely your great beauty has been forgotten, the magnificence of your feast days and your wondrous song. The sweet sound of your harp, which was once a source of joy, has been silenced and it has become the voice of lamentation. In His rage, God has destroyed the reputations of the guardians of your honour, the king and the priests. Your enemies have seized you and violated you. You have wept for this and mourned day and night, and this endless grieving makes the tears hang drearily on your cheeks and yet there is no-one among all your lovers to look after you and comfort you.² Sad mother, turn to your children and say: 'Alas, dear children, all who are now Christians, hear me and take my desolate pain to heart! Give a thought to what has happened to poor me and see the trap of misery in which I am held so bitterly. My wondrous inheritance is overgrown and has been given to outsiders. Strangers have violently taken possession of all my houses. Noble princes, let your hearts thirst for my sweet breasts, which flow with balsam and wine, milk and honey, with no trace of bitterness. Worthy knights and bold men, show me what your claim to nobility is founded on! Take up your weapons and your shield and rise up to help me.'³ With your sword on your hip strike out against the heathens and release me, poor wretch, from all my sufferings. Take me from the hands of faithless sinners and free me from my troubles. It is right that you should do this because I am your mother, who gave birth to Christianity for you.' Now we will leave this topic.

¹ Lamentations 2, 5–6.

² Lamentations 1, 2.

³ Psalm 35, 2.

Digression [continued]
Lines 22,048–161; IV, 81–8

In the year of our Lord 1294 Pope Celestine V adorned the papal throne and Adolf of Nassau was king of the Romans. This Celestine was pope for scarcely a year, and then gave up worldly renown for the sake of his soul and returned to the monastery where he had been a monk.

After him Boniface VIII was elected.

The following year the pope canonised King Louis of France in recognition of his merit. The pure Celestine, Boniface's predecessor in the office of pope, said to him on one occasion: 'You have achieved the honour of this prize by the cunning of a fox, and you are ruling like a lion; later you will be destroyed and will die like a dog.' And that was exactly what happened. When this good man had given up the papacy a woman came to him and called on him to give her his blessing. When he had done so, the child she was carrying in her arms, which had been deformed since birth, and which he had touched with his hand when he gave the blessing, immediately became completely healthy.

In the year of our Lord 1297 Brother Gottfried von Hohenlohe became grand master and remained in office for 13 years. However, he is not included in the list of grand masters because after he had been in office for a while he gave it up and then arrogantly went against the chapter and wickedly took it back again.

In the year of our Lord 1298 King Adolf was killed by Duke Albrecht of Austria, who overwhelmed and killed him in war and succeeded him to the throne.

Thirteen hundred years after the birth of our Lord, the Tartars and their hordes rose up from their settlements against the Saracen, whom they harried and overwhelmed, firstly in Cappadocia, then in Antioch. Then their army campaigned throughout Armenia Major and Minor. Then they rampaged through the whole Promised Land before turning on Gaza and Damascus. The mighty Tartars swept through all these lands in the course of one campaign and killed more than 200,000 Saracen in their savagery.

This same year was known as the year of grace: it was announced that Pope Boniface would grant indulgence of their sins to all those who made the effort to come in worship to the cathedral of St Peter and St Paul in Rome; however fearful, however serious, however many the sins were, they were all expunged. Now we will leave these events and take up the chronicle from where we left off.

About Brother Konrad Sack, the master in Prussia
Lines 22,162–97; III, 279

Brother Konrad Sack became sixteenth master in Prussia in the year of our Lord 1300 and held office for six years.¹ This warrior of God was a pleasant man who

¹ In fact, 1302–6.

was popular with everyone, because he treated rich and poor alike so kindly that the words of Solomon might well have been written of him: 'He is dear to God and all upstanding people'.¹ When he had been in office for six years, as I mentioned, his body was so weakened by all his exertions since his youth and by illness, that his strength failed him. He had to relinquish office because of his illness, and took up residence at Golub, which he himself had built, where he lived until his death. Then he was buried with great honour at the cathedral church at Kulmsee. May God receive his soul!

How Castle Aukaimis was destroyed for the first time
Lines 22,198–263; III, 280

During the period of office of this master, in the year 1301, one of the garrison at Aukaimis began to regret in his heart of hearts that he had been so deluded as to be in thrall to the devil for such a long time, and wanted to give up the false teachings of the false gods and bind himself in service to the commandments of the true God and become a follower of Christ. His name was Drayko and he had a son who went by the name of Pinno. He secretly sent the son to meet Brother Volrad, the commander of Ragnit, asking him in the name of God to accept his conversion, rescue him from the hands of the heathens and make him a Christian. Brother Volrad told the master about the meeting and on his advice assembled an army and set off to the castle at Aukaimis with the intention of bringing this man home with him. When the brothers were making their way secretly to the castle, God, who in His wondrous way can bend all things to His will and to His praise (as He did here), decreed that it was the turn of Drayko, who was the reason for the whole campaign, to be on guard duty that very night. When he realised they were outside he opened the gate to them and let them in to the castle. Then they threw themselves on the sleeping Lithuanians, stabbing and slashing at them until all the men were dead, except one, a son of Sudargus, who escaped very seriously wounded. They took the women and children prisoner and razed the castle and its defences to the ground, and then joyfully took Drayko back to Ragnit, where he received the holy sacrament of baptism in the name of the Lord, along with all his household, in return for the kingdom of heaven.

How Brother Gundram and many Lithuanians were killed
Lines 22,264–309; III, 281

At this time, according to what I have read, there was a Brother Gundram, a man who was small in stature but had the courage of a hero, as all his exploits demonstrated. He set off with nine armed men in pursuit of Lithuanian raiders

¹ Ecclesiasticus 45, 1.

who had captured ten men and ten horses from the vicinity of Christburg. He caught up with them and attacked them in a wild area some distance away. In the first encounter a heathen inflicted a gaping wound on Gundram, from which his intestines fell out of his body. Undaunted, however, he kept on fighting until he had killed all the Lithuanians and won the battle; then he collapsed and died. Afterwards his men had brought his body to Christburg, and the women he had set free, and for whom he had died, followed the body. These women insisted that they had seen two snow-white doves hovering visible to everyone above the body, stopping when it stopped, staying above the dead man and flying above it wherever it was taken.

How the area of Löbau was sacked and 65 Lithuanians killed
Lines 22,310–57; III, 282

In the course of the same year, not long after these events, another group of raiders came once again from Lithuania, attacking five villages in the region of Löbau, capturing and killing around 200 Christians before they left. The brothers from Christburg set off in pursuit, and when they had caught up with them once more in the wilderness they realised that the heathens had split their troop into two groups which had gone in different directions. So the brothers too split up and went after them. One party caught up with one of the groups, which had scattered during the flight; they killed 65 of them and released nearly 70 women and children from captivity. The other group only found five Christian children who had been left behind. They later heard that very few of these raiders reached their homes: some drowned and some starved to death, some were so overwhelmed by their misfortune that they hanged themselves, so in the end they all died.

How the Grand Master Brother Gottfried von Hohenlohe gave up office and Brother Siegfried von Feuchtwangen was elected
Lines 22,358–83; III, 283

In the year of our Lord 1302 the Grand Master Brother Gottfried von Hohenlohe went through Prussia to Livonia with 50 brothers, whom he left there to help keep control of that territory. He came back the following year and held a meeting of the chapter at Elbing. There he gave up his office, but then after having returned to Germany, basely wrested it back again. When he originally stood down Brother Siegfried von Feuchtwangen was elected grand master and he hurried to take control of the headquarters which at that time were at Venice, according to what I have read.¹

¹ Gottfried von Hohenlohe was grand master from 1297 to 1303 and continued to be recognised as such outside Prussia until he died in 1308. Siegfried von Feuchtwangen was

Of Brother Heinrich von Kunzen
Lines 22,384–671; III, 284

During the course of the same year Brother Heinrich von Kunzen, originally from Thuringia, died in Prussia; he had committed a great deal of evil while he was still in thrall to the world: he devoted himself wholly to killing, robbing, thieving, swindling, committing arson and much else from his youth onwards. Finally, one day at dusk a man came towards him astride a black horse, like a warrior. This man said to him: ‘Come on Heinrich, follow me. I will take you somewhere where there is more rich plunder than you have ever had before. What are you waiting for?’ Heinrich was very excited, because he was greedy for possessions, so he rode after him, following wherever he went across rough terrain and along difficult paths. Finally he reached a place where his horse reared up and tried to go back; the more he spurred it on the more it resisted, because it could see the evil in front of him which the man could not, because of the darkness. The stranger was riding in front of him as if he was on level ground; he became angry and wanted to hurry after him, but however he beat and spurred the horse to drive it on it just neighed and reared up. Finally he lost all restraint and spurred the horse with both spurs, saying ‘In God’s name go forwards’. As soon as he had spoken these words his companion, the devil, shouted back, ‘What a fall would have broken your bones if you had not said that. The name you have invoked has saved you and shamed me.’ With this the devil disappeared, leaving Heinrich alone, not daring to move from the spot, and he stayed there, very afraid and in great danger, until dawn. Then he saw the horrors which the horse had seen: he was on a rock pinnacle above an abyss so deep that he could not see the bottom, into which the devil had intended to cast him to his death. As he looked down he crossed himself and praised God who had watched over him, protected him and saved him from plunging from the rock straight into hell. After this something else happened. One day at dusk he saw a stern judge sitting solemnly on his chair; around him were many people, all clamouring for justice for the evil deeds Heinrich had committed against them. There were many complainants. Finally the judge called him forward and asked him what his response was to so many serious accusations. He stood there very

elected grand master in 1303 and was initially based at the order’s headquarters in Venice, where he was able to build up his support. The fate of the Templars, the call to unite all the orders under Philip of France, the weakness of the Avignon papacy and the fact that Venice was under an interdict and Pope Clement V was about to launch a crusade on it may all have contributed to the decision to move the order’s command structure to Prussia in 1309. During the preceding year the order had seized control of the duchy of Pomerelia, including the city of Danzig (Gdańsk), which had been disputed by neighbouring powers since the local dynasty died out in 1294. The day after this situation had been regularised by buying out the Brandenburg claim to the duchy, Siegfried von Feuchtwangen moved into the Marienburg, on 14 September 1309. He died in 1311. See Ulrich Niess in Arnold (ed.), *Hochmeister*, pp. 51–6.

pale and silent, because he was guilty of all of them. Judgment was then passed and he was sentenced to a terrible death. When the judgment had been given, he turned in great distress to the solemn judge and all the court around him, as if he wanted to plead with them, but he dared not speak. Finally the members of the court put an end to the distress which his evil deeds had rightfully brought upon him, and asked the judge to spare his life, because he would shortly change his ways and lead a better life. Heinrich then swore to the judge that he would immediately join the Teutonic Order, and as soon as he had done this the whole vision disappeared. When he came to himself he immediately went to his wife, pale and shaking with shock, and told her about the court and its sentence and the promise he had made, asking her very sincerely to give her approval and allow him to fulfil his oath. This lady was gracious, young, noble and beautiful; she scorned his request, refused to listen to him and would not give him leave to go. He was very disappointed and repeated his plea on many occasions, but she refused him as adamantly as ever. At length he began to vacillate about whether he would keep his word. While the fool was prevaricating, the devil came to compound the evil and lead him to further wickedness. He appeared to him in a dream as a king, adorned as befits a king and surrounded by many knights, and said to him: 'Heinrich, you are a bold man. I will give you this town and this castle (naming them) and if you make your mind up that you want the rewards due to a knight and serve me in the world, I will make you rich and honour you as I honour my own.' Heinrich began to think to himself, 'It would be good to serve this great lord, whose generosity can bring me great rewards and riches.' While he was dreamily considering these ideas Christ appeared to him with five red wounds, saying, 'Heinrich, look at me. I am the one who can really reward you! I am more generous with my riches than this false king!' With this He felt His side, touching the wound Longinus had inflicted with his spear and said kindly, 'Heinrich, if you serve me, I will give you a place where you will find great riches and endless joy'. With this he woke up and once again told his wife the story, begging her with tears in his eyes to release him from his misery and allow him to join the order. But whatever he said, she refused to divorce him. This caused both of them great problems thereafter, because every night, whether they were asleep or awake, they heard loud knocking and hammering on the walls, and a fierce voice saying grimly: 'Heinrich, stop sleeping, get up and go to prayer because your brothers are up!' The constant knocking and the sound of the voice frightened the wife so much and disturbed her sleep so often that she was finally so tired that she completely gave up all resistance and gave her blessing to his plan to become a monk wherever he wanted. She too intended to enter the service of God and end her days in a life of chastity, so great was the effect of the fear of God on her. As soon as he had received permission Heinrich lost no time in going to Prussia and freely taking the oath in the Teutonic Order. As he had outdone all his companions in evil when he was in the world, so he outdid all the others in the order he had joined in piety and the virtue of his life. At one time he became so ill that he was very weak and lost consciousness; two men came to him: one stood on the right and was a Christian while the other was on the left and

was a Jew. They disturbed the sick man by carrying on a disputation as to which religion was more worthy. The Jew won, and said: 'Heinrich, did you hear that your religion cannot save you at all? I advise you to believe in the Jewish faith, which brings eternal salvation.' Heinrich said to him: 'I believe in one God, the Father, whose commands made heaven and earth, and His only Son, whose mother was the Virgin Mary.' After he had finished sincerely affirming his faith both of them disappeared.

How the region of Karšuva was laid waste

Lines 22,672–703; III, 286

In the winter of this same year the master, Brother Konrad Sack, took a large force into Karšuva, but to little effect, because the guides became confused about the route. They led the army back and forth so that the heathens were warned of their arrival and crept off to places where they knew they were safe. So the master travelled the length of the empty land and achieved nothing other than starting some fires. He did a great deal of this, stayed overnight, and on the homeward journey they crossed the ice on the Curonian Lagoon, a great miracle, because the ice was so thin that it was bending like waves on the sea whipped up by a thunderstorm: the army was tossed upwards and then sank down into the next trough from wave to wave. However, God performed a miracle for them and no-one died.

How Löbau was destroyed

Lines 22,704–33; III, 286

At the same time the Lithuanians set off on a raid into Löbau. When they knew they were close they sent out someone who could speak Polish to find out the lie of the land. Once they had established that no-one suspected they were there, they launched an attack, killing, taking prisoners and pillaging many villages before they left. During their withdrawal the group took two separate paths on their way home. Brothers from Christburg happened on one of these groups and killed 15 of their men and released 50 captured Christian women and children. Those of the Lithuanians who remained escaped home safely.

About an earthquake in Prussia
Lines 22,734–49; III, 287

On St Cyriacus' Day¹ in August this same year at about nine in the morning the whole province of Prussia experienced a very severe earthquake which shook the buildings so hard on three occasions that the people inside could barely stop themselves from falling over. What this unnatural event signified will be explained later.

About the arrival of pilgrims
Lines 22,750–69; III, 288

In the year of our Lord 1304 pilgrims began to travel from Germany to Prussia, to worship God as He had encouraged them to do by the promise of His grace. The first to arrive to tackle God's tasks were Count Werner von Hohenberg, Lord Adolf von Windhövel with his brother and the knight Dietrich von Eller. All of these laudable knights and many other lords from the Rhineland came to Prussia at this time.

How the regions of Pograuden and Gardinas were laid waste
Lines 22,770–829; III, 290

During the same winter the master conceived the plan of sending out two armies, one under the command of Brother Konrad von Lichtenhain, who was the commander at Brandenburg, and the other under the command of that great hero Brother Eberhard von Virneburg, commander of Königsberg. They were to attack the Lithuanians. The two campaigns were so arranged that Lichtenhain first attacked the area of Gardinas, where he and his men set the country ablaze, so that the fires could be seen from a great distance. He did not achieve much, other than setting up a hue and cry among the mounted Lithuanian men, who came out in hot pursuit of him. On the third day after this, as had been planned, Virneburg came riding up at great speed with 2,000 men and launched a surprise attack in Pograuden, rampaging through it taking prisoners, pillaging, killing, burning and laying waste the greater part of the country. During all the fighting the banner of the brothers' army was left unassailed on a hill opposite Gedimin-Burg² from morning until midday. Count Werner, whom I mentioned earlier, was knighted

¹ 8 August.

² Gediminas (1275–1341/2) was grand duke of Lithuania from 1315/6 to 1341/2. He conducted skilful diplomacy with the opponents of the order in order to strengthen his own position and exploit the perceived weakness of the order after the dissolution of the Templars. In 1322 he went so far as to claim that he was considering converting to

there and he himself then knighted many noble young men. When they were ready the brothers left, tricking the Lithuanians who came after them and killing 20 of them, quite apart from all the pillaging and burning they had carried out. Upwards of 1,000 heathens were killed or captured.

How Aukaimis was destroyed for a second time
Lines 22,830–65; III, 290

They did not rest for long, but during the time of fasting, which fell immediately after these events, the same commander of Königsberg gathered an even greater army than he had had before and set off against Aukaimis. One of the garrison there, called Swirtil, had promised to hand control of the castle to the brothers, and indeed he did: he opened the gate to them. Then they killed all the defenders, tied up the women and children and once more burned the fortress to the ground. The commander also ordered part of his army to try their luck in the area around the fortress, where they killed or captured many people and caused a great deal of damage by burning and looting. During this fighting 30 Christians were killed by the sword of the heathens. Afterwards they set off homewards with everything they had captured, taking Swirtil with them; he and all his men afterwards became Christians.

How four brothers and six Christians were killed
Lines 22,866–939; III, 291

In the year of our Lord 1305 Brother Philipp von Boland, who according to what I have read was the advocate of the bishop of Sambia, set off into Lithuania along with nine brothers and 200 men and burned down three villages which belonged to the king, killing or dragging off with them everything they found there. During this time all the nobles in the country were with the king on important business and did not know what was happening. When the noise of the outcry reached the court and the king heard, he set off to track them down with 1,500 armed men. By this time the brothers were so far away that they thought they were out of danger and they had laid down their weapons and their armour. Two hundred horsemen had ridden on ahead in the company of one brother to take the plunder home. The other brothers were following at their ease with their men, some distance behind. The king's army took them by surprise. They defended themselves but during the first attack the younger Boland was run through by a spear and killed. When the advocate saw his relative die he was so grief-stricken and furious that he put his shield on his back, took his sword in both hands and gave the murderer such a

Christianity. Nonetheless, he remained a pagan, thus maintaining both his own independence and the legitimacy of the order's crusades against him.

blow that his head came off. The brothers kept up their defence until four of them had been killed by the enemy: the two von Bolands, Brother Bernard von Honstein and John, a good brother, along with six of their men. Then the Christians who had gone on ahead came rushing back to the battlefield making a huge noise and the king got such a fright from their arrival and the sight of them that he and all his men simply threw down their weapons and fled. The brothers counterattacked, killing 17 of the great nobles of Lithuania; they also hacked to death many of the ordinary Lithuanians.

How the outer bailey at Gardinas was captured
Lines 22,940–23,049; III, 292–3

In the year of our Lord 1306 the Master, Brother Konrad Sack, was reliably informed that a large army from the region of Gardinas had left Lithuania to attack Poland. According to what I have heard he sent out Brother Albrecht von Hagen with more brothers and 400 Natangians under his control, ordering them to wait near the castle at Gardinas to see if they could do anything while its keepers were away. When they arrived in the vicinity of the castle they heard the loud noise of a thunderstorm, which came upon them with such intensity and was so bad that they could hardly see or hear each other. Nonetheless that did not deflect them or hold them back and they continued their advance, and at the height of the storm they entered the outer bailey of the castle in the name of our Lord. At this time the fortress was as big as a town, built up and settled by heathens, and many of those who tried to put up a defence were put to the sword. Afterwards they set fires until it and everything in it was reduced to ashes. Then they left, taking with them as much plunder in the shape of goods, women and children as they could carry or drive off.

When the army arrived home and Brother Eberhard, the commander of Königsberg, had heard of their exploits at the castle, he assembled a force of 100 brothers and 6,000 horsemen and he too set off against Gardinas, in the hope that he might more easily be able to capture the fortress itself, but it was not to be. As soon as the king had heard about the fires he had sent a large number of men. The commander found the fortress well defended by bold, stalwart heroes; when the Christians began to storm it the garrison fearlessly threw open the castle gates and began a battle which went on for a long time. Finally the brothers forced them back and they retreated into the fortress. Shortly afterwards they came out and fought the Christians again. They did this so often that they frightened the attackers by throwing themselves back into the battle with renewed energy. Sometimes one party was driven back, at other times the heathens were lucky and managed to push back the Christians. This continued from dawn until midday and the attackers were unable to capture or damage the fortress. However, in the *melée* many of the heathens were killed and many seriously wounded. Brother Hartmann von Elsterberg was shot through the throat and died later. None of the others died.

A miracle**Lines 23,050–73; III, 294**

During this same year a Lithuanian from Ariogala was in prison for a serious matter on the orders of the Lithuanian king. A Rus'ian who was also in prison with him suggested that he should offer a quantity of wax to God and the Virgin Mary, because their help could release him from any trouble. The heathen made this offering at once and as soon as he was finished his chains fell from him and the prison door opened. He escaped with the help of God and later fulfilled his oath at Ragnit.

About Brother Heinrich von Plötzkau, master of Prussia**Lines 23,074–83; III, 295**

This same year the Saxon, Brother Heinrich von Plötzkau, became seventeenth master in Prussia. He held office for two years until the grand master came to Prussia, after which he held the title of grand commander.¹

About pilgrims**Lines 23,084–113; III, 296**

During this master's time, in the year of our Lord 1307, Count Johannes von Sponheim came to Prussia with the following knights: Lord Adolf von Windhövel, Dietrich and Arnold and Lord Rutger of Eller, Arnold and Jakob Boumgart and many other noble men, all of whom came as pilgrims from the Rhine to avenge God by fighting against the heathens. The master was pleased to see these visitors and assembled a strong force with which he and the pilgrims intended to persecute the heathens, but their plans came to nothing because the ice was so thin that they could not cross and the plan was abandoned.

How Karšuva was devastated**Lines 23,114–33; III, 297**

At the same time, Brother Volz, the commander of Ragnit, heard that the people of Karšuva were near the Memel with an army and intended to attack the brothers. He put a number of brothers and 80 of the men he commanded under the control of Brother Hildebrand von Rechberg, and this dauntless hero took them to Karšuva,

¹ Heinrich von Plötzkau was master from 1307 until Siegfried von Feuchtwangen transferred the order's headquarters to the Marienburg in 1309. From this time the title of master of Prussia became redundant.

which he attacked. He burned and pillaged and brought home 70 women and children, having burned the outer fortifications to the ground.

How the outer bailey at Pūtvė was destroyed

Lines 23,134–73; III, 298–9

Not long after this Brother Volz, the commander at Ragnit, assembled the people he commanded and sailed with them up the River Jūra,¹ from where they went secretly to Pūtvė.² They arrived there at dawn while the whole garrison were still asleep, entered the castle and killed anyone who dared resist them. They took the women and children prisoner. Some of the Lithuanians saved themselves by fleeing to the main castle after they had been woken by the noise of battle.

At the end of August in this same year, after they had rebuilt the outer bailey so that it was even stronger than before and the people had brought the corn they had grown into the same defences, the commander came once more with his men, sailing up to the castle at Pūtvė, capturing the outer bailey and burning everything inside: both buildings and corn were consumed by the fire and whatever Lithuanians he found were hacked to death. They took the women and children and their goods away with them.

How 82 Lithuanians were killed

Lines 23,174–207; III, 300

In their castles which are in the front line against the Christians the Lithuanians generally observe the following practice where guard duty is concerned: their king has issued a strict order that once one troop has defended a castle for an agreed period of time, generally a month, after that time is up that squad leaves and another one arrives to take over guard duty. Eighty-five men were seen leaving Bisenė as a result of this procedure. By the time they had gone as far as the plain at Calsen the brothers at Calsen had had advance notice of their departure and Friedrich von Liebenzell, Dietrich von Aldenburg, 20 further brothers and 60 of their men were waiting in an ambush for them; they attacked them boldly and killed all of them apart from three who escaped, but not before they had been seriously wounded.

¹ A tributary of the River Neman, western Lithuania.

² Jeroschin: Putenica; Lithianian Pūtvė: situated at the confluence of the Akmena and Jūra rivers.

How Pūtvė was destroyed
Lines 23,208–55; III, 301–2

According to what I have heard, there was a man called Spudo in charge of Pūtvė who was secretly a supporter of the faith. He invited Brother Volz, the commander at Ragnit, to come and capture the castle at Pūtvė, which he himself would hand over to him. When the commander heard this he was pleased and set off quickly and secretly with the brothers and all the manpower at his disposal at Ragnit. Spudo opened the gates and helped him enter the castle. They did not spare anyone: they killed or captured everyone who was there and could not escape them. After the ferocious attack they burned the castle to the ground; it is still in that state today. Then they invited Spudo and his father and his whole household for the nourishment of their souls to give up paganism and become baptised Christians.

The inhabitants of Karšuva deduced from this campaign that there was no way in which they could hold ground or resist the brothers; they left the area, abandoning two fortresses: Skronaitė and Bebirvaitė.¹ The brothers reduced the fortresses to ashes and they are still deserted.

How Sambia was devastated
Lines 23,256–75; III, 303

In the year of our Lord 1309 two evil men, Mansto and Sudargus assembled 5,000 horsemen from Samogitia and rode over the Curonian Spit into Sambia, where they destroyed the communities of Rudau and Powunden.² They would have gone further if they had not heard that the brothers were lying in wait in force, so instead they fled home at midnight.

About the arrival of Grand Master Siegfried in Prussia
Lines 23,276–315; III, 304

In the year of our Lord 1309 the Grand Master Brother Siegfried von Feuchtwangen came to Prussia with the intention of settling there. In his wisdom he moved the headquarters from Venice, where it had been since the loss of Acre, to Marienburg in Prussia, where he too settled.³

In this same year the brothers were plagued by many great difficulties; the master, that same Brother Siegfried, instructed the priest brothers across the whole order that after every act of worship they should without fail recite the prayer

¹ Situated near the modern town of Eržvilkas, Jubarkas district, Lithuania.

² Rudau is modern Melnikovo (Lithuanian: Rūdava); Powunden is modern Chabrowo, both Russia.

³ See p. 245, note 1.

Salve Regina, while all the lay brothers should knee to pray the Hail Mary in praise of the sweet Mary, so that she might alleviate their suffering and protect them from all harm.

How Sambia and Natangia were attacked
Lines 23,316–59; III, 306

In the year of our Lord 1311 on the eve of Ash Wednesday King Vytenis of Lithuania came to Prussia with a great army to attack the Christians and ran amok in both Sambia and Natangia, destroying, burning and looting. He also killed many Christian men and he captured and took away countless girls, women and children during the nine days he was in the two regions. The joy of the Shrove Tuesday celebrations, with their surfeit of eating, dancing and drinking, which the Christians were enjoying without a care, were tainted with bitter terror. God had abandoned His people because He was angry at their evil ways and so He gave them into the hands of the heathens and perpetual captivity. What terrible misery this caused. Five hundred Christians were driven off as well as the possessions they looted. They took so much, it is impossible to give details. And so King Vytenis rode home in all his arrogant pride.

How Pograuden was destroyed
Lines 23,360–407; III, 307

As soon as King Vytenis turned back home the brothers' army rode along the same road in pursuit of him. The commander of the army was Brother Friedrich von Wildenberg, the commander at Königsberg at the time. The heathens had scarcely arrived back in their own country, rested after their exertions and made offerings in praise of the gods they worshipped who had brought them good fortune in their campaign and resumed their lives, carefree and in high spirits, when God dealt them a rough and fatal blow, because the Christians launched an attack on Pograuden and killed all the people there. Very few survived; they all had to die. The Christians took revenge on them savagely for their sufferings: buildings were burned to dust; they took away large numbers of prisoners, horses and a great quantity of possessions and brought them back home. The region of Pograuden was totally destroyed and pillaged and so many of its men killed that it was not capable of revolt for a long time after. In this way the Christians were able to take revenge for the wrongs inflicted on them.

How the region of Gardinas was destroyed**Lines 23,408–49; III, 308**

At the same time as the army was rushing with all speed to Pograuden Brother von Berga took five brothers and 400 Natangians into the region of Gardinas. When they reached the Bibber marshes – the Bibber is a river¹ – they lost their way and the guides led them the wrong way across the wilderness for two days. This was the result of God's prescience, because if they had taken the correct route they would have arrived early and would not have met their intended target; the soldiers I spoke of before who had gone on the campaign with the king had not yet arrived home from their long journey. So getting lost and the detour helped them to find the travellers resting at home after their journey and they killed all of them and many others. In addition they brought away with them many people and a great quantity of goods. On their return home a section of the army which had been left behind fell into their hands. They killed two of them and took their belongings.

About the death of Grand Master Siegfried von Feuchtwangen**Lines 23,450–69; III, 309**

On the fifth of March this same year the Marienburg headquarters lost its leader, for that pure man of God, Brother Siegfried von Feuchtwangen, was caught in Adam's snare, which he set for all men and in which this one too was trapped. He was laid in the earth with great honour in the place that he came from: he lies in the cathedral church at Kulmsee. May God honour his soul!

How the brothers defeated the king of Lithuania**Lines 23,470–897; III, 310**

Good fortune breeds arrogance; arrogance is evil since it resists authority and destroys everything. Men who are raised high by arrogance are also brought low by it. This is clearly illustrated in the case of King Vytenis, the proud heathen, as I shall tell you now. He had always had good fortune, as you have heard me tell. That made him so proud that he thought he could threaten any kingdom he pleased, as could be seen from the stupid things he said. His pride seduced him so much that he mocked his creator, God, as you will hear later, and God punished him suitably for his shameless behaviour and destroyed his honour. It happened like this. After he had campaigned in Prussia, as I described earlier, causing great damage and distress and bringing grief to many hearts, finding no-one offered any resistance he planned to attack the land once more. He took 4,000 proven heroes, chosen for their courage, skilled and strong in battle, and set off for Prussia,

¹ It has not been possible to identify this location.

launching a savage attack on the bishopric of Warmia early on the day before Palm Sunday,¹ rampaging through it with his men, attacking and killing and destroying the whole country as far as Braunsberg, so that there was nothing outside the cities and fortresses they had not captured or killed, burned or dragged off as plunder in the ferocity of their attack. During this campaign the dogs insulted the honour of God and His servants; they frenziedly burned all the churches they came across. They uncovered the altars, knocked over the chalices for the sacrament and the cloths which covered them, and these people wickedly destroyed everything dedicated to God and consecrated to His service, including the Host, God's blessed body, which was grievously mishandled by them in their contempt, defiled and spat at. Some of them disdainfully ate it, others in their arrogance threw it contemptuously on the ground where they trampled and scuffed it with their feet. They perpetrated so many terrible acts, many more than I will describe now. They proclaimed insultingly and derisively: 'Now the Christians are finished for all time because we have destroyed their faith. We have destroyed their god who was so presumptuous that he allowed them to torment us and trample us underfoot. No-one now can relieve their misery because we have annihilated their god.' After they had tormented the country in this way for three days the king left to return home with immeasurable pride,² taking with him such a quantity of goods that no-one could make an inventory of them, and over and above this, aside from the men he had murdered across the country in his ferocious onslaught, he had taken around 1,300 girls, women and children prisoner and driven them off with him in chains. What an outpouring of terrible misery there was, as children saw their mothers so cruelly bound; what terrible grief was in the mothers' hearts as they saw their children suffer in the same way. What desperate suffering as mothers saw their daughters being violated and the daughters their mothers. O good, powerful God, avenge your poor people and yourself. The Lithuanians withdrew until they arrived at a wild and lonely area of Barthia, where they settled down to rest on a plain which in Prussian is known as Woplauken. There this wretched king went around looking over the plunder; finally he went to look at the many women and girls who stood pitifully bound before him. This wicked, presumptuous man said mockingly to them: 'Tell me, where is the god of whom you are so fond, who should be helping you now? Why is he not coming to your aid? I think that your helpless Christ is a nobody.' With that he took a container which had been brought to him which had contained the sacrament of the body of our dear Lord Christ Jesus and emptied it unceremoniously on the ground at his feet, where he trampled it. Then he said: 'Look, you stupid people, how I'm trampling on the god to whom you pray. He is incapable of helping you or himself, or of releasing you from your misery. Christian beliefs are all simply vain imaginings. Our gods are the powerful ones and they have ensured that we compel you to work for us in captivity. It is right that our great gods should be eternally praised and honoured.' As the poor

¹ 3 April 1311.

² II Maccabees 11, 4.

Christians witnessed this atrocity they trembled with the horror of seeing their creator treated so contemptuously in front of them by the heathens. Their hearts seethed with bitter distress and suffering and yet they could do nothing but sigh and suffer in silence. As the night came to an end and morning broke, Brother Heinrich von Plötzkau, the great commander, and many other valiant heroes arrived. Who else could it be? It was the honourable community of the brothers; high and low, young and old, numbering around 80, and with them many skilled and tested bold warriors. They had all joined forces against the evil king and by their bravery they intended to avenge the shame and the suffering he and his people had so cruelly inflicted on God and the Christians. When they drew near they found the heathens camped on a hill which was ringed by defences. They did not hesitate; the Christians got into formation and attacked the enemy. In the first assault the Christians lost 40 men, killed by the king, but nothing daunted they pressed on like lions; the largest part of the army pushed on towards the top of the hill with their banners, pressing forward against the heathens, who defended themselves fiercely, throwing down spears and missiles at the Christians so that it looked as if it were snowing. Brother Gunther von Arnstein made inroads on their flank, with one troop attacking the Rus'ian bowmen, who even at that period were using their bows and sharp arrows against them. However, after a short time Brother Gunther overran their position and they retreated with Brother Gunther in hot pursuit. In the midst of all this in the name of God the brothers' banner reached the centre of the defensive fortifications. That gave the heathens such a shock that immediately there was a great noise and people began falling over themselves to run away, just like a flock of starlings when someone scares them. Now chase after them, bold heroes. Don't let these wicked, unworthy people get away from you. Avenge the shameful insult which this evil people offered to your God, the torrents of misery and the innocent blood shed by your poor people. Take pity on the holy churches and their beautiful adornments which lie in ruins, burned down and the sound of praise silenced. Win your heavenly reward and avenge the humiliating chains, and may the degrading looks they cast on pure women and virgins be your spur to vengeance. O worthy knights, share the bitterness of the distress the heathens inflicted on your people! What terrible misery: they are lying dead, stained by their own pure blood. Strike back boldly and show no mercy on the Lithuanians. You should stab and hack at them until they are completely silenced. Now follow them with battle cries – the game is won; chase, heroes, chase! The heathens have lost heart. The brothers rushed headlong after the enemy and hacked, slashed and stabbed so relentlessly until many of the heathens lay dead before them, run through or heads broken by the brothers' swords, and many terrible torrents of red heathen blood, spilled by the brothers' vanguard, were visible against the green of the battlefield. The good Lord slaughtered them ferociously with the rod of His wrath, robbing them of life, persecuting them with righteous revenge. The Christians continued the slaughter and the pursuit all day and all night until they had put to death all the Lithuanians. Many of them died by drowning; some hanged themselves or died of despair. Nonetheless the king

escaped with three men. God alone knows why he too was not killed like all the others: it is beyond me. When they returned to the battlefield with all their people after their blessed deeds, there was such great joy that many tears were shed, openly and in private, and all together gave praise and thanks to God, who had consoled them so emphatically with His steadfast support in their sorrow and had given them such a wonderful sign in their victory over the heathens. The sad group of captured women ran up to the brothers. They were gently freed from their chains and fell weeping at their feet, welcoming them with the words: 'May God and all the inhabitants of heaven greet you, dear lords of God and all heaven. We poor people hail you too, because your arrival has saved us from a bitter fate. Noble knights of God, may God always honour you on earth and in heaven, because your bold actions have broken the chains of suffering which bound us in perpetual captivity. We were wretchedly lost and now we have been born again and saved from death by you. May God grant you a blessed life here and the reward of eternal joy in the kingdom of heaven!' The brothers said 'Amen'. The women and the captured Christians who were freed as a result of this battle numbered 1,300. It was a wondrous time and a blessed day, for the whole security of the country of Prussia depended on the outcome of the battle: if the battle had been lost the Christian faith would have been persecuted and wiped out all over Prussia. However, God graciously ordained that this disaster was averted, as I have described. May His name be praised and honoured for all eternity. Now all say 'Amen'. After this they captured 2,800 horses whose riders had been killed, over and above those who had died with the heathens in the lakes, and they took quantities of plunder I cannot begin to describe. This laudable battle took place on 6 April. It was the Wednesday of Holy Week in the year of our Lord 1311. As an eternal memorial to this blessed victory and in praise and honour of our dear Lord Jesus Christ the brothers graciously founded and richly endowed a nunnery in the city of Thorn.

How Pograuden was destroyed

Lines 23,898–957; III, 311

In the summer after these events Brother Gebhart von Mansfeld, the commander of Brandenburg, and a brave warrior in wars and battles, assembled 1,500 horsemen and many brothers and went to campaign in Pograuden, pillaging and burning, killing and fighting many of the people there. When they were about to leave the leading nobles among the people of Samogitia, having been forewarned of the brothers' arrival, assembled all their forces and set out after them to attack them. When the commander realised they intended to fight he unhesitatingly slaughtered all his plunder, killing all the livestock and people they had captured in order to demonstrate that they were willing to fight. The evil Masio and Sudargus and others with them wanted to fight, but Mansto advised them against it. He said: 'We should check in case the brothers have set a trap for us. They were boasting in

front of us and I think this must mean there are more of them than we can see so we should turn back and not give battle.’ In this way the brothers escaped without any trouble. Afterwards the Lithuanians enquired as to who had been the commander of that army. They were told that it was a brave young hero called Gebhart of Mansfeld, the commander of Brandenburg. One of them remarked, ‘He was very bold on this occasion. But tell him that if he attacks us often with so few men and behaves as he did today, he will not live to be an old man.’

About a betrayal

Lines 23,958–24,011; III, 312

At this time a Lithuanian who was the former chamberlain to the king of Lithuania was being held prisoner in Balga. He swore on his life that he would deliver the castle at Gardinas to the brothers if they would release him from prison. He told them in detail how he would bring this about, giving the exact time so the brothers released him and let him go home. There the heathen revealed the whole discussion and his oaths to the king. Brother Heinrich von Plötzkau set off with many brothers on the plan as agreed with the chamberlain; with him he took 5,000 men. As he drew near to the castle at Gardinas he encountered one of the king’s guards, an old man, and in order to save his life this man answered all their questions and told them, ‘You have been betrayed. If you proceed with this campaign the king is at Gardinas with a large force and plans that when half of your army have crossed the Memel he will attack them; if he succeeds in killing them he intends to go after the others. I am telling the whole truth.’ When the brothers heard this they gave thanks and praised God for saving them so mercifully from such great danger and returned home.

How Salsenicka was devastated

Lines 24,012–75; III, 313

Immediately after returning home Brother Heinrich put together an extremely powerful force: it comprised 150 brothers, so many horsemen I cannot tell you the exact number and 2,000 foot soldiers. With this army he set off to a region where the brothers had never been before known as Salsenicka.¹ When the army was approaching Gardinas they came across four guards. They killed three of them and decided to spare the fourth if he told them what was happening in Lithuania. In response he told them: ‘No-one knows you are here. Indeed, by way of proof I can tell you that 50 of the king’s men are coming today to enclose an area for the king to go hunting.’ They came as he had predicted, and afterwards, when they had killed them, the army took to ships and sailed across the Memel to the Lithuanian

¹ Modern Šalčininkai, Lithuania.

side, where they left 12 brothers and the 2,000 foot soldiers to guard the ships. The others set off against the region we have mentioned and arrived in Salsenicka unnoticed and without any mishap on St Processus's Day.¹ They launched a ferocious surprise attack, destroying and burning everything they found there. They also burned down three fortresses and killed everyone they came across: old and young, male and female. They slaughtered so much livestock that the carcasses were scattered right across the field. They stayed there overnight and on the next day they drove great quantities of goods away with them and around 700 people over and above those they had killed. Only God knows how many of them there were.

About the Grand Master Karl Lines 24,076–109; III, 314

In the year of our Lord 1312 Brother Karl von Trier became thirteenth grand master amid much ceremony.² He held office for nearly 13 years. Pope John³ summoned this master to appear at his court; he went there and dealt with many issues concerning the order. This pure man of God was very clever; he could speak French very well and used to defend his own cases in front of the pope and cardinals in his own words. He could talk so well, in such a lively manner, that even his opponents enjoyed listening to him and heard him out. He stayed at the court for one year. He had to leave when he became ill, and he was ill for a long time before he finally died at the order's house at Trier. That is also where his grave is.

¹ 2 July.

² Karl von Trier held office from 1311 to 1324. He was active in consolidating the take-over of Pomerelia and in mediating with the order's enemies in Riga and Poland. His predecessor, Siegfried von Feuchtwangen, had abolished the role of master of Prussia when he moved the headquarters there. This appears to have caused resentments which Karl von Trier inherited. He was forced to stand down in 1317, but in the ensuing outcry he was reinstated as grand master at a general chapter at Erfurt which was attended by his Prussian opponents. He did not return to Prussia, which was administered in his absence by Werner von Orseln, one of his appointees, and the newly appointed master of Prussia, Friedrich von Wildenburg, one of the Prussian faction. Karl von Trier went to Avignon, where he was able to defend the order's interests successfully against the archbishop of Riga. He took ill while there and returned to Trier, where he died in 1324. See Klaus Conrad, 'Karl von Trier', in Arnold (ed.), *Hochmeister*, pp. 56–60.

³ John XXII was pope from 1316 to 1334. His predecessor, Clement V, under pressure from the French King Philip IV, had been responsible for the destruction of the Templars.

How the house at Christmemel was built**Lines 24,110–55; III, 315**

Grand Master Karl consulted widely in Prussia in 1313 and went there and built a castle six miles up the Memel river from Ragnit to the praise of God and to protect Christians, and called it Christmemel.¹ So many ships were there while it was being built that they were moved alongside each other to form a bridge across the Memel right across to the Lithuanian side. People heard the Lithuanians saying that they were more amazed by that than by any of the other clever things they had seen the Christians do. When the castle was finished holy relics were carried in procession into the chapel in the castle while all the priests sang a mass to praise God. Many of the ships sailing across the waters laden with equipment and supplies for the castle sank in a storm. Four brothers and 400 men on the ships died as a result.

A miracle**Lines 24,156–81; III, 315**

At this time a Bavarian bowman was living at Ragnit. One night when he lay down and went to sleep the devil came along and bit his toe so hard that he shouted out loud: ‘What is that biting me?’ He replied, ‘It is me, the devil, who has been biting you’. ‘Why are you doing this?’ The devil answered: ‘When you lie down to sleep you usually make the sign of the cross too small and you do not cover yourself. I found that your toe was sticking out. If I had found you entirely unprotected I would have swallowed you whole.’ The Bavarian was very scared, and since then, day and night he has made very big signs of the cross to protect himself from the hatred of the devil.

How the castle at Bisenê was stormed**Lines 24,182–93; III, 316**

That same summer Brother Heinrich of Plötzkau, marshal of Prussia, set off to the castle at Bisenê with a large force and attacked it fiercely. However, the onslaught achieved nothing except that many were wounded on both sides, so they left.

¹ Modern Skirsnemunė, Lithuania. Now that Prussia was at the centre of the order’s work the grand master was concerned to secure its core territory. Christmemel served the purpose of strengthening the border with Lithuania.

About a warship**Lines 24,194–221; III, 317**

During this same year Brother Werner, the commander of Ragnit, had a warship built and fortified to use to attack the heathens. In addition to this he managed to assemble many ordinary ships and he sailed upriver with them to Junigeda with the intention of attacking the castle. When they were close by a wind got up and there was such a violent storm that the ships were thrown up onto the beach. The castle garrison came running up with their weapons and began to attack the ship but they were fought off so bravely by the brothers and their men-at-arms on the ship that many Lithuanians were killed or seriously wounded and the brothers managed to escape.

How the warship was destroyed**Lines 24,222–77; III, 318**

When the king of Lithuania heard of this ship he was very displeased and perturbed by the news and discussed with his men many plans as to how they might destroy it, because they were all so concerned about it. Finally he selected one of them, Surminas, who was brave and quick-witted, and put him in charge of 100 ships with more than 600 warriors and around 100 horsemen who rode alongside, and he sailed downstream to Christmemel, where they knew the ship to be, and attacked it. There were four bowmen guarding the ship at that time. They defended both themselves and the ship very bravely. Then the brothers came rushing up and shot at the heathens, inflicting great losses on them. Finally, after a prolonged assault, they cut the ship's anchor cable and the ship began to float down the Memel. There was a tremendous uproar and everyone went after it. The bowmen defended themselves and wounded many of them, killing Surminas's brother Scoldo. Finally the heathens captured the ship and burned it, killing all four bowmen. The heathens did not gain a great advantage from this since so many of them were wounded that a fortnight later 350 of them were dead.

How the outer bailey at Bisenè was burned down**Lines 24,278–89; III, 319**

Around the same time Brother Heinrich attacked Bisenè once more. He selected some Sambians and Natangians and launched a ferocious onslaught against the castle. He did not capture it but he burned down the outer bailey before he left.

How Medininkai was destroyed**Lines 24,290–361; III, 320–21**

In the year of our Lord 1314, after the Day of the Circumcision of Christ,¹ the Marshal took warriors from the region of Natangia and Sambia, along with their brothers, and set off against Lithuania to the region of Medininkai.² One night after he arrived some Lithuanians crept into the army, stabbed four Christians and stole two horses. The noise this caused meant that the army was disturbed all night, but they were not diverted from their purpose, and putting their faith in God they launched an attack on Medininkai in the early morning and destroyed everything within a three mile radius. They killed or took prisoner around 700 people. Then they took them away with them, along with a great deal of plunder.

Immediately after this, at Candlemas,³ the marshal, Brother Heinrich, brought all his forces together into a fierce army. He went once more to Medininkai and attacked a fortress there called Sirdite.⁴ The garrison in the fortress resisted him manfully and the battle between them raged on so ferociously and was very hard fought until 19 of the heathens were dead, one of whom was Masinus's brother. On the Christian side there were seven fatalities, three of whom were brothers: brother Heinrich Ruthenus, Ulrich von Dettingen and Rembold von Isenburg. Four Christian heroes died along with them, namely Queram, Spagerot, Michael and Mindota. Since the brothers were unable to inflict any damage on the fortress they sacked the surrounding area, looting and burning the length and breadth of the region.

How the Krivichi were defeated**Lines 24,362–509; III, 322**

At the beginning of autumn that same year the marshal, Brother Heinrich, commanded all his people to follow him with enough supplies for four weeks and set off on a long, strenuous journey across swamps, marshland and rivers, mountains, valleys, sand and dense brush, in short, as hard a journey and as difficult a campaign as any army had ever set off on from Prussia in all the time the brothers had held that country. The campaign was aimed at the Krivich lands.⁵ Because of the distance they had to travel they hit on the excellent idea of leaving two loads of their supplies of food at particular spots, so that they would be able to find them again on their return. They left the final load along with the drivers

¹ 1 January.

² Jeroschin Medenicka, modern Medininkai, east of Vilnius, Lithuania.

³ 2 February 1314.

⁴ Sisdite, modern Xedeyctain, Lithuania.

⁵ The Krivichi were the Lithuanians' nearest neighbours to the south and east. They inhabited parts of the area surrounding the upper Neman river which are now in Belarus.

of the wagons close to Gardinas, according to my information, and then turned towards the region of the Krivichi, who by then had had advance warning of their arrival. The inhabitants had taken refuge in fortresses and in the forests, so that they were unable to take advantage of their long journey by attacking the people. Instead they burned down the town of Novgorodok¹ and all the surrounding area which belonged to it, and then spent the night resting in front of the castle at Krivich, attacking the enemy with missiles and causing many injuries on both sides. Diwan, a Pomesanian nobleman, was shot and died of his wounds during the campaign. Since the campaign had been unsuccessful the army turned homewards again, very disappointed that they had not had better fortune. When they reached the spot where they had left the mule drivers with their supplies their hopes of relief were shattered, because David of Gardinas² had killed 30 of them and taken away all the rations and equipment which had been left there. He had also seized around 500 horses and driven them off to Gardinas. There was a tremendous outpouring of misery because hardly anyone had any bread or anything else to eat. This completely broke the morale of the army. On the long journey home through the wilds some were forced by hunger to eat their horses. Many a bold hero had to grub for roots and eat leaves to stave off the pangs of hunger. A fair number who were delicate by nature died because they could not digest the tough foodstuffs. Nonetheless they had great hopes for the second spot where they had left food. When they arrived they did not find anything there either, neither the people nor the food they were depending on. They had all gone home because the army's return had been delayed beyond the agreed date and they thought they had all been killed. What a terrible shock it was when they found nothing there, because all their hope of help was gone. They did not know what to do, but looked wretchedly at each other, each of them shocked at the sight of the other because their faces, which had been pink, plump and fresh, were now sunken and ashen as a result of starvation. But no-one could comfort the others in the plight they found themselves in because they were all equally unfortunate. The good marshal showed how sorry he was about the pitiful predicament of his people by weeping openly and giving the army leave to split up and go home by whichever route they chose to find food. They set off in a great rush and many rode 20 miles in a day to hurry home. Many were so broken down that they barely managed to get home in six weeks from the day they set out. The effects of starvation made them look like dried-out sticks and they were barely recognisable, because many of these warriors travelled 100 miles from the Krivich lands without seeing or eating bread. Many died later as a result of being given something to eat.

¹ Now Navahrudok, Belarus.

² David of Gardinas was Gediminas's military commander and closest ally. He was made prince of Pskov in 1322. He was killed in 1326, by a former Polish ally who had been shocked by his raid into Christian Brandenburg. See below, lines 26,420–637; III, 361.

How Ragnit was stormed**Lines 24,510–43; III, 323**

In the year of our Lord 1315 on the Day of the Ascension of the Virgin¹ all the Lithuanians from Samogitia attacked and laid siege to Ragnit without any warning. The brothers defended themselves vigorously and left the fortress to counterattack. However, they were overwhelmed and forced back into the fortress. Brother Johannes Poppo was killed. When the Lithuanians realised they could not take the castle they trampled down the corn in the fields surrounding the Scalovian castle and then returned home.

How Christmemel was besieged**Lines 24,544–619; III, 324**

Afterwards, in the autumn, King Vytenis assembled all the Lithuanians in his kingdom that were capable of bearing arms and went with them to Christmemel, which he besieged for 17 days, launching daily attacks on the castle from all sides using two trebuchets and the many bowmen in his company. When the brothers saw these machines approaching and realised the danger they were in they burned down the outer bailey and established themselves in the main castle to launch a counterattack. When the news reached Prussia 10 brothers and 150 men were sent by ship from Sambia to defend the castle. But the monstrous heathens had invested it so cleverly and guarded it so securely that no-one was able to get in or out of the castle to help it. So the brothers stayed on board their ships and sailed about, making frequent attempts to get in to the castle. The Lithuanians also often arrogantly attacked them and also fought with them from ships so frequently that they suffered heavy losses. Eighteen Christians were also wounded by the heathens. Finally the king heard that the master was approaching fast with a strong army. He did not dare linger any longer at the castle, so on his final day there, in a great rush, he ordered wood, sticks and straw to be piled into a cart and had it carried into the defensive ditch, as if he was intending to burn down the whole castle. While they were doing this only the ditch separated the brothers from the heathens and it was easy for them to shoot arrows at them at will, killing and wounding so many of them that I cannot give exact figures. When King Vytenis saw his side being so weakened he burned down the siege engines and left.

¹ 15 August.

How the outer bailey at Junigeda was burned down
Lines 24,620–47; III, 325

Grand Master Karl had set out with a powerful force with the intention of relieving Christmemel from the besiegers. While he was on his way messengers informed him that they had moved off and gone home. When he heard this he allowed his army to disperse and, keeping 6,000 men with him, he boarded ships and sailed to the hill of Junigeda, arriving secretly at night at the defensive palisades round the castle, and killed many heathens. He also captured 78 children, girls and women and burned the outer bailey to the ground. Afterwards he went to Christmemel, had everything which the sinful people had destroyed rebuilt and renovated and strengthened the fortifications in other areas.

How Pastovia was laid waste
Lines 24,648–61; III, 326

During the winter of the year of our Lord 1316 the marshal gathered a powerful troop of horsemen and rode into the region of Pastovia in Lithuania. He took the area by surprise and completely devastated it, burning and looting. He killed or captured 500 men, women and children.

How Medininkai was destroyed
Lines 24,662–99; III, 327

When the marshal returned to Königsberg at the end of the campaign he found that a large number of pilgrims had recently arrived from the Rhineland to fight against the arrogant Lithuanians. The counts of Berg and Neuenahr were among them, along with Arnold von Eller and many other noble heroes, all of whom very much desired to have their wish to fight God's enemies to avenge the faith. So Brother Heinrich assembled yet another army and rode with it to the province of Medininkai. They ferociously pillaged the whole region, looting and burning and subduing around 200 heathens whom they either killed or took prisoner. During this encounter 50 Christians were killed by the heathens. While this was going on the brothers established their banners unopposed at Medewaga, where the count of Berg knighted many noble men.

How 80 Lithuanians were killed
Lines 24,700–15; III, 328

According to what I have read, Friedrich von Liebenzell was commander at Christmemel. He assembled a force of 20 brothers and 60 men and went over to

the Lithuanian side, where he set up an ambush. This was on a day when the guard at the castle of Bisenė was due to change. They attacked 80 Lithuanians, killing all but five of them, who fled.

How Bisenė was wiped out
Lines 24,716–41; III, 329

Shortly afterwards, on St Ambrose's Day,¹ Brother Dietrich von Altenburg set off from Ragnit with Brother Friedrich Quitz and another, whose name I do not know, and three armed men; near Bisenė they ambushed a troop who had been on guard duty and which was leaving to go home, killing six of them. The others saw the spies who had been posted on the road and were able to flee. Since they had all disappeared the brothers pushed on to Bisenė, and finding it completely unguarded, they burned it to ashes. Bisenė has been in ruins ever since.

How two villages were burned down in Medininkai
Lines 24,742–65; III, 330

After this, at the height of summer Brother Hugo von Almenhaus, the advocate of Sambia, took 800 men under his command, as he had been instructed by the marshal, and set off on a campaign against the region of Medininkai. At a crossroads in the forest he set an ambush for the heathens and then sent brothers from Ragnit and their men out into the region where they destroyed two villages, returning to the site of the planned ambush with their plunder. Around 200 heathens set off in hot pursuit after them. Those in hiding were in too much of a hurry and emerged from their hiding place too early. When the Lithuanians saw them they fled and managed to escape, so the brothers' campaign was unsuccessful.

How God's miracles protected the brothers from great harm
Lines 24,766–813; III, 331

In the year of our Lord 1317 Brother Heinrich the marshal assembled a force of Natangians and Sambians and set off during winter to the province of Vaikiai. When he was so close to the area that he intended to attack that he planned to launch his assault the following morning, and just after they had gone to sleep that night, a terrible thundering noise was heard above them, as if all the winds were clashing and thundering in a tremendous thunderstorm. Everyone was very unsettled by the constant noise and all the horses became so restless that they reared up, pulled free of their halters and ran off into the woods where they could

¹ 4 April.

only be caught again with very great difficulty. As a result of all these crises the army became so scared that the campaign was abandoned and they returned home. Afterwards it was discovered that the Lithuanians had also assembled a huge army which had been waiting for the brothers for three days in battle order at Vaikiai. If they had ridden into the province they would all have died in this huge ambush. The earlier events prevented this from happening.

How the outer bailey of Gedimin-Burg was burned down Lines 24,814–937; III, 332

This following summer on St John the Baptist's Day¹ the Marshal von Plötzkau set off once more to Lithuania with men from Sambia. When the campaign reached the province of Pograuden he divided the army into four sections. Brother Hermann was sent with 60 men to destroy some of the villages in the region; however, this plan failed because they took a wrong turning. He commanded Friedrich von Liebenzell to ride with 150 men to Gedimin-Burg,² which he was to capture by covert means. When he approached, however, the castle had had advance warning and had its defence ready. Nonetheless he was able to burn down the outer bailey. The resourceful marshal then told Brother Albrecht von Hagen and 60 horsemen to attack Sudargus's lands. They burned down his home and rampaged through nearby villages, killing many Lithuanians and capturing many women and children. He also took Sudargus's wife and children prisoner with his whole household. The fourth group under the brothers' banner also set off, but achieved nothing because their guides took them the wrong way. Soon after all this the four troops reassembled and set off for home. On this campaign one of the brothers' men-at-arms returned miraculously from Lithuania in the following way: when Brother Albrecht was campaigning in the province this man was close behind him. During the chase the man fell so heavily to the ground from his horse that he was concussed and lay senseless for a few moments. When he recovered, he looked around and could see neither banners nor horses. This caused him great concern and distress and he called on God and the Virgin Mary to rescue him from the dangerous situation he found himself in. In return he would serve them even better than he had in the past. He passionately commended himself to their protection, making the sign of the cross to ward off all harm and walked off towards Ragnit. He came across a village and asked the people the way to Ragnit, which they pointed out to him. When he had gone a short distance after leaving them they regretted having let him out of their hands because they realised that he was one of the brothers' men (because he was carrying weapons). They all began furiously to hunt him down with dogs. When he realised from the noise that they

¹ 24 June.

² The exact location of this castle in Pograuden has not been established. See Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, p. 56.

were following him he was very afraid and hid in some brush. They searched for him so close to his hiding place, often circling within three paces of him with the dogs, that they could have touched him, but God prevented them from seeing him and they did not find him. Finally they gave up and, abandoning the search, they went home. He then set off once more on his journey and quickly arrived safely at Ragnit, still carrying his weapons and giving thanks to God and His Mother for their help, because he had escaped from his enemies.

How the outer bailey of the castle at Junigeda was burned down
Lines 24,938–83; III, 334

On St Matthew's Day of the same year¹ Brother Heinrich the marshal arrived with a fearsome army on the plain of Calsen, where he sent 1,500 men on foot through the forest called Went, leaving their horses on the plain; at dawn the following morning they crept up on the castle with the intention of entering it in secret. However, they were thwarted because the heathens there had advance warning and immediately sent smoke signals, which was the usual practice to alert the heathens in the surrounding areas that the castle was being attacked by the brothers' army. Since this approach was unsuccessful the army pushed on with a prolonged, ferocious attack on the castle. Yet the heathens' defence was so sound that all their efforts were in vain; when they realised this they burned down the outer bailey and left. A large Lithuanian army which had assembled in response to the smoke signals immediately set off after them and engaged the brothers in violent skirmishes. They did this repeatedly until Brother Dietrich von Pirremont was killed. Many of them were also killed and wounded before they finally went their separate ways.

How the outer baileys at Junigeda and Pieštė were burned down
Lines 24,984–95; III, 335

In the autumn of the year of our Lord 1318 the marshal assembled a large army and set off to attack the castles of Pieštė and Junigeda. In both places they burned down the outer baileys and all the corn harvest for that year.

How the outer bailey at Junigeda was burned down a second time
Lines 24,996–25,017; III, 336

In the year of our Lord 1319 that man of God, Brother Heinrich von Plötzkau boarded ships with many warriors with the intention of attacking and capturing

¹ 21 September.

Junigeda and Pieštė. As he sailed towards Pieštė his men failed to keep the necessary orders he had issued for the success of the venture. He was annoyed and left Pieštė alone, instead sending 500 men to approach and attack Junigeda in secret. However, they found that the garrison had been alerted and they were only able to burn down the outer fortifications.

How some Lithuanians were killed
Lines 25,018–57; III, 337

At the same time, when all the rivers in the wilderness had broken their banks and flooded wide areas as usual, David, the commander of Gardinas, set off with 800 men on a campaign into Prussia. At the border he had the army take cover and he galloped with 80 men into the region of Wohnsdorf, where he burned some houses and captured Christians and a great deal of plunder which he carried off with him again. However, the commander of Tapiau, Ulrich von Dreileben, his friend Quitz and a few of his men set off in hot pursuit, after first destroying all the bridges which the Lithuanians had to cross to leave the country, and killed 55 of the heathens; the others barely escaped with their lives and went to the hiding place which they had established. The people there too were gripped by panic. They fled and encountered so many dangers and difficulties that we later heard only a few of them reached home.

How the marshal Brother Heinrich von Plötzkau was killed along with 29 brothers and many people
Lines 25,058–171; III, 338

In the year of our Lord 1320 Brother Heinrich Plötzkau, always keen to confront the accursed heathens in battle, took 40 brothers and all the horsemen in Sambia, went up to the Memel and launched a campaign into the province of Medininkai, intending to mount another devastating attack there. While they were campaigning across the province the heathen army had assembled in force. They did not intend to confront them in the province itself but instead focused on the roads the brothers had used to enter the country, which they blocked with trees and transformed into a thick forest to confuse the Christians as they returned. When the campaign was over and they set off again a few of them drove the plunder in front of them. The majority stayed with the banners which followed the plunder. The heathens were not in a hurry to fight for the plunder; instead they waited until the vanguard with the banners came to a narrow point in a wood. In this cramped space the heathens attacked the brothers from all sides to terrible effect and the savage onslaught, in a place where they were unable to defend themselves, continued for so long until they were so exhausted from trying to defend themselves and from the weight of their weapons that they were incapable of moving from the spot or defending

themselves any more. Then the rested troops fell on them, shedding the Christian blood of 29 brothers and many other Christians. That bold lion Plötzkau, who never hid from the enemy, was also killed by the heathens. O dear God, acknowledge the ferocity with which he persecuted your enemies and admit him to the heights of joy. Give him refuge with your warriors in the bounds of heaven in the company of angels, as his soul had always desired. Take care of the others too, because they put their trust in you. Wipe away any remaining sin, so that the devil cannot swallow them. Save them from the chaos of hell and bring them safely through all their distress into the protection of paradise, and us with them, sweet Jesus, Amen! When the heathens had killed everyone there they captured Brother Gerhart von Rude, advocate of Sambia, put him in chains and cruelly put him to death in this way: they dressed him in the armour of three men and set him on a horse which was tied to four stakes, according to their custom, and then put so much wood around it that they could barely see horse or man, and then they set fire to the wood and burned God's elect knight to death in the resulting furnace. This was done as an offering to the heathen gods for their victory. O Mary, take care of the victim, and gracious Lord Christ, because he was martyred for you and we pray to be reassured that he is in heaven.

A digression

Lines 25,172–613; IV, 89–125

Now we will leave the chronicle of Prussia and tell you about some of the strange things which happened in the world, as they have truly been told to us.

In the year of our Lord 1310 a comet was seen shining beautifully in the north-west. It appeared in the evening and its tail sometimes pointed east and sometimes south.

In the same year King Andrew of Hungary died¹ and there were extended negotiations about the kingdom between the duke of Austria and the king of Bohemia. Finally it was given to Charles, the son of Andrew's daughter.

In the same year Albrecht, king of the Romans, defeated the duke of Austria and the bishops of Mainz and Cologne in battle.

In the year of our Lord 1302 in the city of Perugia in Italy a court condemned a murderer to be beheaded for his crime. As the body lay lifeless the head called out in a loud voice, begging, 'Bring me a priest, because Mary, the pure Mother of God, to whom I have fervently prayed every day, is sustaining me with her strength and helping me so I will not die before I have made a confession and been absolved of all my sins.' So a priest came and heard the head's confession and penance. When it had received absolution it died at once.

¹ Andrew III died in 1301. After a short interregnum he was succeeded in 1308 by Charles Robert of Anjou. Charles was the son of Charles Martel, prince of Salerno, whose mother was the daughter of Stephen V of Hungary.

In the same year a dispute broke out between Pope Boniface and King Philip of France. The pope argued that the kingdom of France was directly subject to the papacy in both spiritual and temporal matters. He sent the king of France a bull and affirmed that if he did not comply he would be excommunicated as a heretic. The king assembled all his clergy in Paris in his palace and had the letter read out to them and then burned. The king also raised 15 complaints about the pope and called for a council to be convened to consider them. However, the pope was able to prove his innocence of all accusations at a council in Rome.

In the same year the people of Flanders rebelled against the king of France and killed counts, nobles and 3,000 Frenchmen in a battle.

In the year of our Lord 1303 Pope Boniface agreed to accept Albrecht, king of the Romans, as emperor and made the kingdom of France subject to him. However, this arrangement has since changed because Pope Clement V revoked the agreement.

At the end of the year Pope Boniface was taken prisoner in his birthplace, Anagni, and the church's treasures were removed and scattered. However, he was later freed from his enemies and taken to Rome, where he died.

He was succeeded by Benedict, who had previously belonged to the Order of Preachers. Benedict only held office for a year.

In the year of our Lord 1305 Pope Clement V was elected while King Albrecht was still the wise and pious king of the Romans.

When Pope Clement was crowned and consecrated as pope in Lyon a terrible accident took place as he was leaving the church. A wall collapsed and crushed many of the pope's entourage, killing the duke of Brittany, who was crushed while he was leading the pope's horse. Charles, the brother of the king of France, was also injured. The pope's horse fell under the barrage of stones which also hit the pope and knocked off his crown. A very valuable ruby set in the top of the crown was lost at the same time. These were all forewarnings of what was to happen to him afterwards.

In the year of our Lord 1306 in Königsberg in Prussia, God graciously began to perform miracles to honour St Rupert's shrine and many people and dogs and other animals were found to be cured of various illnesses.

In the year of our Lord 1307 King Wenceslas of Bohemia died and his son, also Wenceslas, succeeded him on the throne. Before the year's end that pure warrior was murdered, stabbed to death by one of his own knights. Bohemia had no heir and so came into the hands of strangers because Albrecht, the king of the Romans, immediately occupied it and installed his own son.

In the same year the knights of the Hospital of St John captured the island of Rhodes, which was inhabited by Turks, and five other islands.

In the year of our Lord 1308 on St Walpurgis's Day¹ Albrecht, the king of the Romans, was killed by his nephew, Duke John Lackland, from whom he had taken his inheritance in Austria by force.

¹ 1 May 1308.

On St Catherine's Day¹ of the same year the Electors agreed to select Count Henry of Luxembourg to be king of the Romans and he was duly crowned at Aachen at Epiphany.²

On the same day two years later he was crowned again, this time in Milan with the iron crown.

This same year a combined army of Tartars and Armenians launched an attack on the Sultan in Syria, who turned and fled. More than 10,000 of his horsemen were killed.

In the year of our Lord 1312 at the Council of Vienna Pope Clement V proscribed the Order of the Templars, not because of any judicial decision but by his prerogative. This order had been founded 200 years before.

During this same year Henry, king of the Romans was crowned as Emperor Henry VII in the Lateran Church in Rome. There were 62 years from the death of Emperor Frederick to this Emperor Henry.

In the year of our Lord 1313 this same pope canonised St Peter the Confessor, the former Pope Celestine V. His feast day is on the eve of St Vitus's Day.³

During the same year a comet was seen on St George's Day.⁴ It shone for 10 evenings with its tail pointing towards Italy.

This same year the death of Emperor Henry on St Bartholomew's Day⁵ was announced. The comet shone for 10 days marking the 10 days during which the emperor was ill before he died.

During the same year by the will of God herring catches were very poor in Prussia. Previously they had always been abundant and plentiful.

On 1 March 1314 at the eighth hour three suns shone at Carpentras where the Roman court was at the time. One was in the east and it behaved very strangely. Two others were in the south. One of the others did not behave like a normal sun while the other kept to the normal track. They stayed for a long time, each giving out its light. They were giving a portent of Pope Clement's death and that after his death there would be a dispute among the cardinals about who should be elected next. This dispute lasted a year and four months before they could all agree on their choice. The same sign was seen long ago, as Comestor has described, in the time of Julius Caesar, when three suns were visible in the same way; that was linked with his death, because after his death too there were disputes in the Senate.

After this, at the time when we normally pick may blossom, on 18 April, Pope Clement's life came to an end on the first anniversary of the day the comet had disappeared. The papal throne remained empty thereafter for 28 months.

On 21 October of the same year Ludwig of Bavaria and Duke Frederick of Austria were involved in a disputed election as king of the Romans while the papal

¹ 25 November 1308.

² 6 January 1309.

³ 14 June.

⁴ 23 April.

⁵ 24 August 1313.

throne was still vacant. The wars between them went on for eight years. Then on the eve of St Michael's Day¹ they met for a pre-arranged battle which decided the matter; Ludwig captured Frederick during the battle and held him prisoner for two years, after which they were reconciled.

In the year of our Lord 1316 Pope John XXII was elected. The following year this pope canonised St Louis. He had been a member of the Friars Minor and was the brother of King Robert of Sicily, and his feast day was set as the fifth day after the Ascension of our Lady.²

In the year of our Lord 1320 lepers were burned in France because it had been put about that they had poisoned water supplies, causing the deaths of many people and livestock.

In the year of our Lord 1321 three men in lands of the Wends were accused of poisoning and were severely punished: they were thrown in a vat of boiling water. Two of them died quickly, while the third survived unharmed, which was a sign of his innocence.

In the year of our Lord 1322 a boy called Thomas was living in Brandenburg in Prussia, the son of Hertwig von Pokarben. It was said of this boy that when he was four he died and then recovered through the power of the Holy Cross which a brother, von Fleckenstein, had previously brought to the province. It had also previously performed a miracle which proved its authenticity. Brother Gebhard von Mansfeld, the commander of Brandenburg, threw the cross into a fire and it leapt out again unharmed. This event was witnessed by many people.

In the year of our Lord 1324 at the convent at Christburg Andreas Zimmerman sat down for his evening meal and dipped his bread into his beer; it was seen dripping red liquid just like blood. His companions who were sitting around him thought it was coming from a wound, but they could not find one; wherever they looked he was healthy and unscratched. They were all amazed, especially him, because he could taste the blood in every bite.

In the year of our Lord 1326 the king of Hungary killed 30,000 Tartars who had inflicted great losses on his kingdom. We will conclude with this and continue with the chronicle from where we left off.

About Brother Thammo at Balga Lines 25,614–55; III, 339

In the year of our Lord 1321 Brother Thammo, who was born in Meissen, died, in the way of all flesh. He had been a brother for 56 years, all of which he had spent at Balga. He spent the 30 years before his death within the convent, never travelling anywhere beyond what is permitted to the brothers there. He prayed often and devoutly to God; he avoided wine and mead and all intoxicating liquor; it was his

¹ 28 September 1322.

² 19 August.

habit to wear a hair shirt next to his skin; he fasted on the days preceding saints' days, eating only bread and water and always disciplined his flesh with abstinence and strict chastisement. When he finally took ill and was approaching death he received the sacrament with great fervour. Afterwards he lived on for 39 days without eating anything before he died on St Simeon's Day.¹

About pilgrims, and how three areas in Lithuania were destroyed
Lines 25,656–741; III, 340

In the year of our Lord 1322 many high-born, noble pilgrims arrived in Prussia. The most notable among them were Duke Bernhard of Sweidenitz, with a large retinue, the lord of Geroldseck from Swabia and two counts from the Rhineland: of Jülich and of Wildenburg. The lord of Lichtenburg and Plichta brought his brother from Bohemia. With these lords came many knights and men who all wanted to test themselves against the heathens. So Brother Friedrich von Wildenberg, who was deputising for the master here and governed the province,² took all his own people and brothers, a total of 150, and with the pilgrims launched a campaign in the depths of winter into the territory of Vaikiai, which they attacked, burning, destroying and killing so many of the heathens that barely anyone capable of bearing arms remained. The army continued through the night, burning down a castle; the following morning it continued its advance into Raseiniai territory; on the third day they entered the area of Ariogala and completely destroyed both areas. On the evening of the third day, when they had totally subdued the region with their onslaught, they fell on the castle at Pieštė, attacking it ferociously. The garrison fought back bravely, but the pilgrims' army was so well equipped that whatever they slashed or hacked at them with or threw at them it did not hurt or wound them. They climbed up to them in the battlements until groups of five, four or three Lithuanians forced them singly off the walls with swords or spears and they fell to the ground. They went on attacking in force until the onset of night forced them to pull back. Early the next morning they were about to resume the attack when the heathens in the fortress gave assurances and hostages as a guarantee that they and their wives and children would henceforth remain subject to the brothers and never resist them again. But the heathens did not keep their oath, because their king forced them to abandon it.

¹ 18 February.

² Friedrich von Wildenberg had led the faction which forced Karl von Trier to leave Prussia and was *de facto* master of Prussia until the election of Werner von Orseln as grand master in 1324.

How the bishopric of Dorpat was laid waste
Lines 25,742–55; III, 341

During the time that the Christians were off campaigning in these three areas many of the Lithuanians launched an attack on Livonia, where they turned against the bishopric of Dorpat,¹ burning, destroying and completely overrunning it; aside from other damage they perpetrated in the region, they killed or took captive 5,000 Christians.

About a hard winter
Lines 25,756–89; III, 342

In the year of our Lord 1323 the lords of Zinnenberg and Egerberg and even more pilgrims from Bohemia and the Rhineland were in Prussia to fight there, and wanted to campaign with the brothers in Lithuania; but the winter was so severe that the army had to return: the brothers were afraid that the inadequately clothed army, which was unused to the frosts, would die of cold. That winter was so cold that the fruit trees did not survive the frosts. They were set back to such an extent in many places, both in orchards and on hills, that they withered and did not bear fruit. In the same cold spell the ice on the salt sea was thicker than anyone could remember, so thick that you could ride in a straight line from Denmark to Lübeck, a distance of 15 miles across the sea.

How Reval was destroyed
Lines 25,790–815; III, 343

During this same winter, David, the commander of the castle at Gardinas, and the Lithuanian army set their sights on Reval² in the lands belonging to the king of Denmark, where he burned and inflicted great misery, destroying the whole region. In addition to other damage, he killed or captured more than 5,000 Christians, driving the well-born girls and women into perpetual captivity. He also killed many monks and priests; he desecrated chalices, church robes and all the equipment dedicated to the service of God. The evil dog also terribly defiled the bread and wine for mass.

¹ Now Tartu, Estonia.

² Now Tallinn, Estonia.

How the city of Memel was destroyed
Lines 25,816–35; III, 344

After this, with the intention of disrupting Christian life during Lent, the Lithuanians from Samogitia rushed off to Memel and captured the city, which they burned to the ground, along with three places of refuge nearby; they reduced everything which was not protected within the walls of the castle to dust, including buildings, cogs and other types of ships. They killed a priest brother and took about 70 Christians prisoner in the town, some of whom they executed at once, while they took the others away with them.

How Brother Friedrich Quitz was killed
Lines 25,836–49; III, 345

After this, on the eve of St Peter's Day, which is celebrated in the middle of August,¹ the Lithuanians launched an attack in the region of Wehlau, attacking six villages, driving off and taking with them everything they found there. The heathens killed 36 Christian men during this attack. The bold warrior Friedrich Quitz lost his life at that time. Take him into your care, Jesus Christ!

How Dobrin was devastated and 9,000 Christians captured or killed
Lines 25,850–909; III, 346

The Lithuanians were fortunate that everything was going their way whenever they campaigned against the Christians. So they once again assembled a great army and in the course of the same year, on the Day of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross,² came with it into the lands of the Duchy of Dobrin and rampaged the length and breadth of the territory, looting and burning and causing great distress. They killed and captured 6,000 Christians outside the fortresses alone. In addition they captured the city of Dobrin, exterminating 2,000 and more Christians aside from the nine priests they killed and the ten churches they despoiled, where in their jealousy they killed 60 lay and clerical scholars, and put simply, slaughtered so many Christians that, along with those they drove off into eternal suffering, they totalled around 9,000, and as if this was not wretched enough, they took away all their possessions, so that the greater part of that area is still desolate today. Take this lamentable cruelty to heart and have pity on the distress and suffering Christians had to endure: as has already been described to you, within the space of barely a year the heathens killed or cruelly drove off into perpetual captivity

¹ 31 July.

² 14 September.

20,000 people, quite apart from the various fortresses they captured and burned to the ground

How 12 Lithuanians were killed

Lines 25,910–53; III, 347

During this same period, at the time when the corn is harvested, Brother Heinrich, the commander of Tapiau, assembled a force of eight brothers and 300 men and set off for Semigallia to see if he could find any harvesters and reward them with death. The plain of the Memel river on this side is near the castle of Pastovia. It was rainy and wet when they arrived, so they did not find the harvesters, who had gone back home across the Memel. Nonetheless before they turned back they were able to capture 34 of the heathens' horses which were grazing there. But the heathens saw them and gave chase. When Brother Heinrich realised this he set up a hide-out at the side of the track and sent some of his men to continue on down the road. When the heathens were nearly at the hide-out one of them blocked the way. He rolled the dice, according to heathen superstition, and shouted loudly: 'Do not pursue them any further. Turn back because the Germans are lying in wait nearby.' The Lithuanian troops made to turn back but the brothers waiting in the ambush realised they were fleeing and charged out of their hide-out, riding down and killing 12 of them.

About pilgrims

Lines 25,954–73; III, 348

In the year of our Lord 1324 Counts Johannes and Philipp von Sponheim and Lord Peter von Rosenberg from Bohemia and his cousin Hermann came to Prussia. With them came many knights from Bohemia, Alsace and the Rhineland. These pilgrims were unable to attack the Lithuanians because the winter weather was so mild that it was impossible to take an army across the ice.

How David's estates were laid waste

Lines 25,974–87; III, 349

After this, during Lent, the tireless brothers set off to Gardinas with 600 Natangian horsemen and burned the estates belonging to David, the commander of the castle at Gardinas, and in addition to the men they killed they took 38 girls, women and children prisoner, and captured a large herd of cattle and around 100 horses.

About a brother**Lines 25,988–26,041; III, 350**

During the course of the same year the Saxon Brother Johannes von Ilberstedt was buried at the house at Königsberg. While he had still been in thrall to the world he lived a disgraceful, sinful life, so to discipline him God inflicted such a severe fever on him that he finally made confession and was given the sacraments and the last rites. While he was sick his habitual wickedness drove him to rape a servant girl who was looking after him. Immediately afterwards God caused the devil to lift him and his bed up high and say to him: ‘You wretch, how dare you commit so heinous a crime against your creator after receiving the holy sacraments?’ The sinner became very afraid and began to call on Mary for help, swearing that if she helped him out of this danger he would join the Teutonic Order. When he mentioned the order the devil dropped him unharmed in a bog, because Mary had protected him. The bog the devil took him to was about half a mile away. After this he went straight to Halle and told everyone the story, citing as proof the fact that all his bedding had been found in the bog.

How the outer bailey at Gedimin-Burg was destroyed**Lines 26,042–73; III, 351**

Afterwards in the month of May, Brother Dietrich von Altenburg, the commander of Ragnit, assembled 40 brothers and 400 men from Natangia and Sambia, and arriving at the outer fortifications of Gedimin-Burg at day break, burned them down and killed everyone he found inside apart from a few who were fast enough to escape to the castle. On the brothers’ side the Natangians lost three killed and two taken prisoner. The heathens also captured one of the clerics from Ragnit, a Franciscan Brother called Otter. You can hear about how he escaped from them and wandered the wilderness for ten days without food before he finally found his way home in Gerstenberg’s book, because he wrote about it in great detail.¹

About raiders**Lines 26,074–149; III, 352–3**

At the same time, a Prussian called Prewilt or Mucko, who was from the bishopric of Warmia, took 19 companions to try their luck raiding in Lithuania. When he reached the wilderness he came across 45 Lithuanian horsemen out hunting. He tracked them skilfully until he caught up with them at night, and when they were still sound asleep he killed them all, and he and his men took their horses and all their possessions and returned safely home.

¹ This book has been lost.

Afterwards this Mucko loaded some supplies on his back and set off once more with a small group of companions to go raiding the heathens. When he had gone a long way into Lithuania he saw a large troop of horsemen, and when they caught sight of him and started to come after him, he and his companions threw away all the rations they were carrying and barely managed to escape with their lives. Afterwards when they reassembled after the danger had passed none of them had any bread or anything else to eat. They were very concerned because they could not think of any way to relieve their hunger. Finally Mucko said to the others, 'Men, we have been unlucky here. We will not be able to reach home before we die of hunger. Before we perish like animals, I think it would be better either to fight the enemy and die honourably or capture something which we can eat. Who knows what adventures with the heathens may still be waiting for us if God wills it!' They all agreed with this proposal and they began secretly to hunt down the enemy until they came upon them lying sleeping without a care in the world. They ran at them and slaughtered them all before they could fight back; then they took all the horses and anything else of value, and having been on the point of total despair, they returned cheerfully home.

About Brother Werner, the fourteenth grand master
Lines 26,150–59; III, 354

During the same year on the eighth day of St Peter and St Paul¹ Brother Werner von Orseln was elected fourteenth grand master at the Marienburg,² and held office virtuously and piously.

How Christmemel was attacked
Lines 26,160–93; III, 355

At the same time 400 Lithuanians came creeping up to the castle at Christmemel secretly at night, intending to storm it and capture it in the morning. They did not succeed because the brothers had been warned well in advance by a fisherman and were waiting there fully armed. When morning came and they launched their attack the brothers countered with many a sharp arrow and in a short time many of them had been killed. A nobleman was among the fatalities. They were very anxious to remove his body. The brothers fought back hard, shooting at them. This enraged the heathens, who rushed up all together, seizing the body by its hands and feet and carrying it off by brute force. Nonetheless before they had managed this many of them were wounded. I do not know the exact number.

¹ 6 July.

² From 1324 to 1330.

About the papal legate**Lines 26,194–271; III, 356**

The citizens of Riga and their archbishop,¹ who was at the papal court, were still at war against the brothers in Livonia and were issuing deliberate lies in proclamations made by emissaries and letters to all the cities along the coast to the effect that the kings of Rus' and Lithuania were ready to give up their paganism and be baptised in the Christian faith without any further warfare, but that this was not being accepted, and they were also announcing this publicly in sermons, to the great detriment of the brothers. They repeated this message in letters sent by emissaries to Pope John and compelled him to send two legates to Livonia to baptise these kings and educate them in the faith. The legates arrived in Riga in the year of our Lord 1324 on the day after St Matthew's Day² and with the authority of the pope proclaimed a truce between the heathens and the Christians. Anyone who dared break the truce or act against it in word or deed was to be immediately excommunicated, and this punishment could only be lifted by the pope. Having accomplished this, the legates sent courteous and clever emissaries to Gediminas, the king of Lithuania,³ to investigate whether his intentions were good and honourable and whether he and the people under his control would abandon their idols and respectfully pray to Jesus Christ, the true God and follow His commandments, receiving Christian baptism in return for eternal life, as he had claimed in the many letters he had sent abroad and to the pope, as was well known. The envoys went to discover his intentions.

How the province of Masovia was destroyed**Lines 26,272–363; III, 357–9**

When the peace treaty had been agreed by the legates, as you have just heard, all the surrounding lands, Livonia, Prussia and Poland were overjoyed to think that they would no longer be troubled by wars. But it turned out differently because that evil king was so set in his sinful ways that he paid little attention to the peace treaty or his baptism, and instead, while the envoys were still with him, he had David set off with an army to Masovia on St Elizabeth's Day.⁴ He overran the province in

¹ Frederick von Pernstein was archbishop of Riga from 1304 to 41. See Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, pp. 13–15.

² 22 September 1322.

³ Gediminas had written a letter to the pope in 1322 which was widely interpreted as meaning that he was willing to convert to Catholicism. In siding with the bishop against the order he hoped to remove the threat of attacks by the order on his territories. For a discussion of Gediminas's diplomacy during this period see Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, pp. 189–228.

⁴ 21 November.

a savage onslaught and destroyed Pultusk, the seat of the bishop, along with 130 villages and devastated many other men's lands, and anyone who dared resist him was captured or killed. The wicked fool burned down 30 parish churches along with everything in them: priests' robes, chalices and the elements of the sacrament were all impiously desecrated; aside from all the other damage he inflicted he killed the priests and murdered the monks. This dog laid waste Masovia, cruelly killing or capturing more than 4,000 Christians. While David was thus engaged in Masovia, the accursed king sent out another army into Livonia to the region of Rositten,¹ which the heathens also devastated, burning and looting. These two armies were sent out by Gediminas to harm the Christians while the legates were still with him carrying out their mission. Judge for yourself how sincerely this heathen dog submitted to the much-vaunted baptism.

Shortly afterwards, on St Catherine's Day,² the envoys the legates had sent to Gediminas came back to Riga, along with a Lithuanian sent by the king, his chief adviser, and this heathen, choosing his words carefully, gave a message from the king to the legates and prelates and everyone assembled, stating that never to his knowledge had any letters been sent to any city or any province or to the pope, formally or in any other way, stating that he had any intention of ever deserting his gods. This message was confirmed by the envoys who had heard it from the king. When the legates had heard the response and realised the king's intentions they left to go back to the pope.

How several cities and castles were built Lines 26,364–419; III, 360

In the year of our Lord 1325, at the instigation of Master Werner, Brother Heinrich von Isenburg, the commander of Königsberg, completed the building work on a castle in Barthia called Gerdauden.³ In the course of the same year Bishop Eberhard of Warmia sponsored the building of a castle he called Wartenburg.⁴ It was in the wilderness on the River Pissa in Galindia. His advocate, Brother Friedrich von Liebenzell, completed the work quickly and when it was finished he gathered his priests and had them sing a mass to the Holy Ghost with great piety and devotion. When the mass reached the gospel they saw a dove as white as snow hovering over the castle, such as had never before been seen in the wilderness. When the mass finished the dove immediately disappeared. During the same year the same Brother Friedrich was asked by the bishop of Glottau to establish a new fortress on the River Alle, which is now called Guttstadt. In the same year Deacon Jordan built a castle near the town of Mehlsack and called it Plut. Brother Rudolf, bishop

¹ Lithuanian: Rezeknė.

² 25 November.

³ Modern Zheleznodorozhnyi, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia.

⁴ Modern Barczewo, Poland.

of Pomesania founded a city on the River Ossa and named it Bischofswerder. Also during this year Brother Otto of Lauterberg, the regional commander in the Kulmerland, built the fortress Neumark¹ on the River Drewenz.

How the land of the margrave of Brandenburg was devastated and 6,000 Christians captured and killed
Lines 26,420–637; III, 361

In the year of our Lord 1326 Łokietek, the king of Poland, sent envoys to King Gediminas of Lithuania, whose daughter had recently been married to his son, requesting him to send him 1,200 men, and had these heathens march with his army into the Mark of Brandenburg. The army entered near Posenau and rode at once to the city of Frankfurt, looting and burning and destroying around 140 villages and many churches. During this attack three Cistercian monasteries were destroyed and two nunneries. O our heavenly consolation, you know what misery these depraved ones inflicted on your chosen successors. Your servants were treated viciously: they razed the churches to the ground, they desecrated the sacred things, they drank from chalices and ate from other sacred vessels and despoiled the altar cloths; they put on the chasubles, hoods and other garments dedicated to the service of God in an affront to God. They spat on, hacked about and trampled underfoot the ornate pictures of God and His gracious Mother Mary, they mocked the sacrament and, and even to speak of this is dreadful, they threw God's body, the holiest of the holies, into degrading filth, if I may call it that. The Poles who were with them witnessed the heathen rabble committing these atrocities and did not prevent them; indeed they also contrived to murder and most cruelly put to death consecrated clerics who had devoted their lives to the service of God: some were strangled, others mistreated and their tongues cut out, others beheaded and their heads displayed on stakes so that the terrible manner of their death could be seen far and wide; yet others had their navels cut out and were disembowelled. They cut the limbs off others and roasted them on a fire. They hung up others and toyed with them, shooting at them and spilling desecrated blood; of the other Christians I can report nothing better than that they killed all the men they came across; they took all the women prisoners whom they could drag away and who were capable of following. Anyone who was too young, too sick or too old was put to death. Many noble women and many maidenly bodies were defiled. Among the girls was one who was so beautiful and delicate that an argument broke out among the heathens over her. One of them broke away from the army and put an end to the dispute by cutting the girl in two. 'Now stop your greedy argument,' he said. 'Now she lies in front of you in two pieces; each of you can have whichever part

¹ Glottau is the modern Głotowo, and Guttstadt is now Dobre Miasto, Poland. The river called the Alle in German is now the Łyna. Mehlsack is modern Pieniężno. Neumark is modern Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Poland.

he wants.’ This story was atrocious enough, but as things stood their grief was too great to mourn. Even more horrors took place: the nunneries were burned down and the pure nuns who were chastely dedicated to God were treated degradingly by the heathens. One heathen wanted to defile one of these saints and rape her. The girl said to him: ‘Don’t do that, help me instead so that I remain pure. I have such great knowledge and skills that no sword will ever wound you!’ ‘Those skills would be worth a great reward’, said the Lithuanian. So she replied, ‘I would like to demonstrate them myself. Have a sharp sword brought to me. I will talk to it in such a way that its cutting and stabbing cannot harm me.’ The heathen had a very sharp sword brought at once. ‘Wait here for a moment,’ she said. The girl fell to her knees and looked towards heaven and prayed fervently saying, ‘O dearest Jesus Christ, because you are my true husband, preserve your poor maid’s purity, so that my crown remains whole and the heavenly garland you have promised to those who live as virgins, and take my spirit, lord, out of this terrible misery.’ When she had finished her prayer she made the sign of the cross and said to the heathen, ‘I am ready; hit me if you wish.’ So he swung the sword at her and her head fell from her shoulders. In this way the pure girl preserved her virginity. They perpetrated countless such atrocities, and when they had completely devastated the region the devilish army went home again. In addition to all the other troubles they caused they had killed or driven off with their possessions more than 6,000 Christians, who have since remained in cruel captivity. A Masovian nobleman called Andreas Gost heard of what had happened. The many wrongs the heathens had inflicted on the pure Christians affected him deeply, so he made up his mind that he would kill the depraved commander of the army, David of Gardinas, or die himself in the attempt. When the Lithuanians had taken leave of the Poles and were heading home across the wilderness, Andreas joined him and rode with him as his friend until he came to a suitable place, a river at which David had stopped to allow the horses to drink. He threw himself on him and after a violent struggle stabbed him twice and then fled. The Lithuanian army set off in hot pursuit, because many of them said he had killed him, but God helped him to evade them all without coming to any harm. In this way Andreas Gost rescued Christendom from its evil persecutor and from the countless trials he in his devilish arrogance had imposed on them and the many defeats he had inflicted, as you have heard.

How Leunenburg and two towns were built

Lines 26,638–655; III, 362

During this year Brother Dietrich von Altenburg, commander at Balga, built the castle of Leunenburg¹ in Barthia at the confluence of the rivers Gruber and Zaine. It takes its name from the plain on which it stands. He also built a town near

¹ Modern Sątoczno, Poland.

the castle at Bartenstein. Luder von Braunschweig, the commander of Christburg, built a town at Gilgenburg¹ the same year. May God be praised!

Lines 26,656–87

Now, with the help of God, I have, as promised, finished translating the chronicle of Prussia from the Latin original into German, using simple words so that a child can understand and using the correct rhymes. If it is found to be otherwise the scribes are at fault, it is nothing to do with me. King of honour, you have spared me for this task: may you be garlanded and praised forever by all creatures. Now I ask you Lord to bless all the minds who come to know this book; may they worship you fervently, love you passionately, and in loving you win the treasure the possession of which is wondrous beyond all measure. Sweet Jesus, you are the joy of all the saints in heaven. O gracious God help us to be lovingly united with you in your purity, to contemplate you unendingly and to sing your praises ever more. Amen and blessings on you.

When Mohrunen was founded²

Lines 26,688–99; S, 2

In the year of our Lord 1327 Brother Hermann of Oppin, head of the headquarters hospital and commander of Elbing, founded the town of Mohrunen³ on the instructions of Master Werner. It is situated on the lake of Maurin, from which it takes its name.

About ‘*In principio erat Verbum*’

Lines 26,700–948; S, 1; 3–8

In the year of our Lord 1326 Grand Master Brother Werner von Orseln decreed during the general chapter meeting that clerics should recite the complete gospel ‘*In principio*’ after the high mass in all houses in praise of the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that when the priest reads the words ‘*et verbum caro factum est*’ all the brothers should kneel in devotion and remain kneeling until the words ‘*Nos cum prole pia*’ are spoken.

In the same year a war broke out. Ludwig of Bavaria, who had earlier been elected king, was excommunicated and deposed by the pope. I do not know what

¹ Modern Dąbrówno, Poland.

² Dusburg’s original text describes events up to 1326. From this point the text is a translation of the supplement to Dusburg’s chronicle which covers the period up to 1328.

³ Modern Morąg, Poland.

the pretext for the opposition to the king was because the Romans elected him unanimously. He took up arms against the Lombards, disregarding the papal excommunication, and fought and won many glorious battles. Then he made his way in splendour to Rome, where he was crowned emperor. After this the emperor, the senate and all the consuls together summoned the pope to Rome. He did not want to come and did not accept the invitation, so they elected a friar from the Franciscan Order as pope. Both the Guelfs and the Ghibellines were in agreement in this.

In the year of our Lord 1328 the castle and town of Memel came into the hands of the Prussian brothers. It had been built by the brothers in Livonia, who had lived there and fought against the heathens for 76 years. Because the Prussians had taken control of this castle they relinquished the castle at Christmemel. It had been built by Master Karl 15 years earlier to keep down the Lithuanians, and had inflicted a great deal of damage on them in many ways, capturing food and other benefits for the convents. This caused the Lithuanians real difficulties, so they were heartily glad when it was knocked down. It was completely destroyed in August on St Peter's Day.¹ I will tell you the reason it was knocked down: the citizens of Riga had used every trick at their disposal to contrive to have the pope send legates to Livonia, who then proceeded to excommunicate the Livonian and Prussian brothers and to forbid them to engage in any warfare with the Lithuanians. The Lithuanians were to observe a truce for three years, while the pope investigated whether they were willing to convert to Christianity of their own free will, as the citizens of Riga persisted in claiming in speeches and letters. The legates told the Lithuanians to observe the truce towards all the Christians on pain of excommunication. But may God have mercy on the way in which the Lithuanians observed the pope's commands. That soon became very clear. If you want the whole story look back at the first part of the chronicle not far from the end: there you will find all the details of what happened about this truce; but the brothers wanted to be obedient to the pope and do as he told them, as was only fitting. Nonetheless they suffered from the lack of plunder and other benefits they captured in food from the heathens at the castles of Christmemel and Memel. So they had to give up one of them because the costs of the two castles were too great for the brothers to bear alone during peace time. So Christmemel was allowed to be destroyed and Memel was left standing.

The destruction of this castle had been predicted a year earlier: one evening at dusk as the stars were beginning to appear three brothers were standing in the refectory in Christmemel when they saw a star in the northern sky which left its normal trajectory and quickly swung back towards the east for a distance of about a hundred paces. It remained there not moving in any direction. The brothers watched the star for a long time; however, it remained stationary until they all became tired of waiting and went away.

¹ 1 August 1328.

There was also an earthquake in the same year that Christmemel was torn down, which was felt only there and nowhere else. It was so strong that all the tall buildings shook and swayed and everyone inside had difficulty staying on their feet.

During the same period 60 brothers and 3,000 men left Prussia to campaign against Gardinas. When they were approaching that region and realised that the castle had had advance warning, on the advice of his brothers the commander selected 400 men to go on a raid in the district of Gardinas, looting and burning. After this raid they returned quickly to where they had left the army. The next day the Lithuanians assumed that the brothers had gone back home and they returned to their occupations thinking there was no danger. Then the army launched its attack into the province, penetrating six miles into it, killing and destroying as they went. As they were leaving, some nobles from Gardinas joined them and escaped with their wives and children. Around 84 of them followed the brothers and have since received baptism.

Also at this time the brothers at Ragnit set off with 80 men to try their luck on a raid against the castle at Pūtvē. An extra 200 Lithuanian defenders had arrived the previous day, unbeknown to the brothers or their army. They reached their goal and at dawn the next day when the garrison was still sound asleep they launched a surprise attack into the castle at Pūtvē, where the sleeping defenders had a bitter awakening. Everyone who did not run away was killed: men, women and children. When they were finished they burned the outer defences and left.

Shortly after this the Ragnit brothers assembled their men once more and set off for Aukaimis, where they were successful in climbing into the outer bailey while the defenders were asleep. They found many Lithuanians still in bed and put them to the sword; very few of those in the castle survived, be they man, woman or child, pigs, sheep or cattle; whatever escaped the sword was consumed by the flames, because they burned the outer bailey down to the ground. Only four men in the castle survived.

How Medewaga capitulated **Lines 26,959–27,052; S, 9**

In September in the year of our Lord 1329 John, count of Luxembourg and king of Bohemia¹ came to Prussia with many of his men and a number of other lords, all of whom intended to do the Lord's work: the duke of Falkenburg and the counts of Leiningen, Neuenahr, Öttingen, Hohenlohe, Weillnau, Württemberg, Hanau, Schauenberg and Falkenstein. Along with these lords came the lords von Kerpen, Gera, Rotenstein and Dahme. There was also the Burgrave of Dohna and many noble warriors from all over Germany: knights and men, all of whom wanted to

¹ John the Blind (1296–1346) was count of Luxembourg from 1309 and king of Bohemia from 1310.

fight the Lithuanians in honour of Our Lady. When all these had arrived in Prussia, Master Werner also assembled his army, a total of 18,000 men over and above the foot soldiers, and around 250 brothers. With all these men he moved off towards Lithuania with the intention of punishing it and exacting vengeance for Christ, whose name and whose cross they have mocked by persecuting the Christians. When the noblemen and the master arrived in Lithuania they immediately laid siege to and stormed the castle at Medewaga on the eve of Candlemas.¹ They kept this up until the garrison could no longer trust themselves to put up a defence. They all called out at once that they wished to be baptised and lead a Christian life if they let them live and received them into Christianity. The master and the brothers did not give much credence to these claims because they knew them and that they would not stay good if they were converted by force, because the wolf can seldom be trained to change his ways: it always wants to steal, bite and be up to its old tricks if he has the opportunity and is roaming free in the forest. However, the king of Bohemia said that they should not prejudge them but should grant them baptism as they requested; that seemed to him to be just and fitting. So the master fell in with the king and the other lords, who agreed that they should be bought for God and had them baptised; there were around 6,000 men, women and children, and they also gave hostages and promised on oath that they would henceforth lead a Christian life. Nonetheless not long afterwards they abandoned their faith and became wolves once more.

How the Kulmerland was destroyed **Lines 27,053–104; S, 10**

At the same time and on the same day as this was happening with the Lithuanians, the king of Poland demonstrated his lack of good faith by breaking the oaths he had sworn and the written guarantees in which he had promised the master a truce until a specific day. This had been negotiated between them by the good offices of the king of Bohemia. The king of Poland disregarded it and fell on the Kulmerland with 6,000 armed men and laid it waste over a period of five days and nights, looting and burning and then leaving. Note how wickedly the false prince Lokietek acted in his wicked arrogance. He had been evil when he was a duke; the pope had recently elevated him to the status of king so that with all his power he might be a future protector and loyal defender of Christians, the church and the faith.² Now he had shown his contempt for them by persecuting those who risked their own lives and property and spilled their own blood to protect the faith and defeat the devil's pagan hordes who were threatening Christendom; and the worst of it was that while the master was away campaigning with the king of Bohemia

¹ 1 February.

² He became Władysław I on 20 January 1320.

conscientiously fighting the heathens in the name of God, he committed the act of wickedness I have just described.

How Wissegrad was burned down

Lines 27,105–324; S, 12¹–15

In Deuteronomy our Lord God says; ‘Mine is the vengeance, and I will repay him in due time’.² However, Mathathias, who was a true lover of God and His honour, taught his sons as he was dying and they were surrounded by enemies: ‘Remember what your fathers accomplished in their day and fight boldly for their inheritance; in this way you will achieve great honour and everlasting renown.’³ Avenge your people by fighting your enemy. Pay them back in kind and fight for your rights or your inheritance will be destroyed.⁴ The master and the brothers took these sound teachings to heart, along with much more from the scriptures and then readied themselves to defend Prussia, won from the heathens and taken into the control of Christians at immeasurable cost, and to nourish the faith which flourished there, established by the blood of many a noble man and now bearing fruit for God, from King Łokietek who wished to destroy both the land and the faith, and the brothers who represented it there. So the master assembled an army and in the summer sent it to the other side of the Vistula to one of the king’s territories where there was a castle called Wissegrad.⁵ At this time the castle was manned by many criminals who were mercilessly robbing, capturing and killing the brothers’ men, whoever they were, as they travelled by ship up and down the Vistula. They arrogantly carried on in this way for many years and were a serious threat to the people of Prussia, whom they plundered, safe in the knowledge that King Łokietek would look after them in the fortress. The brothers now besieged and stormed the fortress with siege engines and trebuchets. They continued for three days without either side relenting; on the fourth day the brothers launched a new bold attack, climbing up the hill, while the defenders fought back, hurling missiles, shooting and defending themselves. Finally, however, the brothers set fire to it and the castle burned down. The fire raged until those in the castle gave up any attempt at defence and jumped onto the palisades. That put an end to their hubris; those who tried to escape the fire were rewarded by being run through by one of the many spears and killed. Those who were taken prisoner fared better, but there were barely eight of them; none of the others survived; none of the goods in the castle could be removed either, because they were all consumed in the fire which reduced the castle to ashes. In this way Wissegrad was destroyed. This happened on the Monday when people

¹ Jeroschin omits Supplement chapter 11.

² Deuteronomy 32, 35.

³ 1 Maccabees 2, 51.

⁴ 1 Maccabees 2, 67–68.

⁵ The location of this fortress cannot now be identified.

process with the cross.¹ Brother Heinrich of Bohndorf was killed at Wissegrad and his grave can now be found at the nunnery in Kulm.

This same summer another army was sent from Prussia to the region around Brest. It spared nothing, devastating the whole area around the town, looting and burning. After this they attacked and tried to capture a castle. When the garrison realised this they wanted to save their skins, so they gave it up in return for their lives and possessions and retreated. The castle remained in the hands of the brothers. After this the army set off once more and surrounded three other castles which they rapidly stormed, demolished and reduced to cinders. They also killed all those in the castle because they were guilty of stealing and looting and were generally evil. One of these castles is called Nakel and its commander was a knight called Heinrich who had consistently lived by robbery, devoting all the power at his disposal to this end and sparing no-one. Cleric and layman, members of the order and secular knights, rich and poor were treated alike, viciously persecuted and robbed. He was captured during the brothers' assault and when they started asking him why he committed so much evil he replied: 'No-one ever punished me for it.' So we see that freedom with no discipline gives rise to great evil.

In the year of our Lord 1330 the counts of the Mark and of Vianden and the brother of the count of Jülich came to Prussia along with many noble warriors, knights and armed men from many parts of Germany for the purpose of fighting and subduing the heathens. The master sent 100 brothers and 3,000 horsemen on campaign with them. This army went to a region of Lithuania known as Vaikiai. When they arrived they realised the enemy had had advance warning, so they simply burned the area and killed livestock; they only killed about 15 men and carried off little plunder because the people had hidden in the forest with their possessions. This campaign took place after St Agnes's Day.² At the same time the brothers from Ragnit took their people to Gediminas's castle in Lithuania, travelling secretly at night. At dawn, when everyone was still asleep they attacked and set fire to the outer bailey. Everything in it was burned: men, women, possessions and livestock were all completely incinerated, and to cut the story short even spoons and pot lids were reduced to dust; only 12 Lithuanians escaped from the castle and were not burned to death.

How Riga was destroyed **Lines 27,325–508; S, 16–19**

This same year at Easter the city of Riga was defeated and the old feud which had lasted so long and caused so many serious wars between the citizens and the Livonian Brothers, as the Teutonic Knights are known there, and which no-one had been able to resolve, so that there was always bad feeling between them, was

¹ The date is unclear. Strehlke (SRP, vol. 1, p. 618) suggests 29 May.

² 21 January.

now finally set aside and completely brought to an end and replaced by the quiet of peace. It happened as follows: Brother Eberhard von Monheim, the Livonian master, had laid siege to the city. When the siege had gone on for a year the supplies of food in the city ran out. The common people revolted against the leaders of the city who controlled the supplies, posing such a threat to them that they were unable to escape their fury. Set upon on both sides, in order to save their lives they were forced to give themselves up to the master, handing over to him their own persons and possessions, the city and all its privileges and freedoms for him to dispose of as he pleased. Even when this was announced the master did not want to enter the city until the citizens had made a complete breach in the walls 30 ells long. The rubble was used to infill the moat. When this became known a woman in Riga remarked, 'What a huge body this master must have if he cannot enter by the gates or a door like other people and has to have such a wide entrance made.'

This was announced on 16 July at four in the afternoon.

Afterwards, in the autumn, King Lokietek brought together all the horsemen he could muster from his kingdom. He also employed many mercenaries and the king of Hungary sent him 8,000 armed men to help him. With this huge army he entered the Kulmerland in force and besieged the fortress and city of Schönsee.¹ However, he could not inflict any damage there and went instead to the castle at Leipe. This too he left undamaged. He let part of the army rampage around the countryside, looting and burning, and after nine days and nights of this, when they ran out of food supplies, negotiations finally persuaded that unwelcome guest, King Lokietek of Poland, to leave and return home. In this army was another Count Wilhelm from Hungary, the commander of the Hungarians who had been sent by the king. Our Lady the noble Virgin Mary appeared to him in a dream while he was asleep one night in the Kulmerland and said angrily to him: 'Why are you destroying my inheritance with your people, land which was bought and planted in the pure blood of many Christians? If you do not leave I tell you, you will soon die a terrible death in great anguish'.

While these Hungarians were laying waste to the Kulmerland the king of Hungary himself set off with his army on a campaign against a king who owed him allegiance. The Hungarians had to travel across high mountains and along narrow tracks to enter the king's land because there was no way of going round them. When the Hungarians arrived to wage war and moved around, ransacking the country at will, the local peasants became aware of them and were very angry. They fled to the hills with all their households and wherever they came across big trees near the paths they cut them through the middle. Afterwards, when the Hungarians decided to return home, and had reached the mountains, the peasants chose their moment to push over the trees on both sides of the paths. Crashing down, they toppled one after the other and fell onto the army. They could not defend themselves and most of them were killed. So God took revenge on the Hungarians for all the anguish they had inflicted on His Mother's land, sending his

¹ Modern Kowalewo, Poland.

people there to take it out of the control of the Teutonic Brethren, who are brave enough to risk life and possessions to protect Christians against the Lithuanians, in praise of the Virgin, pure as crystal, who gave birth to Christ, our true bright sun.

About Master Werner's death
Lines 27,509–82; S, 20

Woe and alas. This same year on the eve of St Elizabeth's Day,¹ which we celebrate in winter, a brother called Johannes, a Saxon born in Endorf was goaded by the devil and his own wickedness to commit a very evil sin. For reasons I do not know he completely lost sight of his own salvation, like one who has taken leave of his senses, abandoning his life, his virtue and his honour, and stabbed to death Brother Werner von Orseln, the grand master of the Teutonic Order.² He killed him among all his men-at-arms in procession at the Marienburg as he was leaving the church after singing vespers. Afterwards the master was taken to Marienwerder and buried. May God accept the manner of his death as absolution for all his sins! The murderer was seized immediately and put on trial. Johannes, see what you have done! You have destroyed and dishonoured your name, because the name Johannes means 'merciful'. You destroyed it because the man who died at your hands was always humble and merciful towards you and good to everyone. Woe, Johannes, you have committed a great evil! Cain killed his brother; your guilt is even greater because you murdered your brother and your father, killing the master of the order whose habit you wore. This made him your brother; his election to master made him your father. Johannes, you have committed a great sin! Herold in his day had his own child killed; that was bad enough, but it is not the equal of this sinful wrongdoing, because the father has the power to discipline his son, but the son should honour and look up to the father. Johannes, you did not do this, so you have been excommunicated and I must count you among the wicked. Now everyone must help mourn this pure prince whose blameless blood was shed!³

¹ 18 November.

² Orseln appears to have been murdered because of the strict measures he introduced to combat indiscipline. See Klaus Militzer, *Die Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005), pp. 100–101 and Klaus Conrad, 'Werner von Orseln', in Arnold (ed.), *Hochmeister*, pp. 60–5.

³ This is the final chapter in the Latin text. From this point until the end Jeroschin is writing independently without a Latin original.

How Poland was devastated**Lines 27,583–624**

In the year of our Lord 1330 the winter was so mild that it was impossible to find ways to the enemy. The brothers and the pilgrims were demoralised because they were unable to campaign or attack the Lithuanians. But as Job tells us, nothing on earth happens without a reason.¹ In this case you can see this because what they thought was a disadvantage worked out to their advantage, as follows. At this time a great number of heathens had persuaded King Lokietek to set off on a campaign against Prussia with them to destroy the whole country. God prevented this in this way: when the Lithuanians arrived and realised that the ice was so rotten that it was impossible for them to reach the brothers' territories, they did not want to return empty handed, so they invaded King Lokietek's lands, seizing everything they came across which could be of use to them. They also took captive and drove off many thousands of Christians into slavery. So Lokietek fell into the pit he himself had dug.

About the election of Master Luder von Braunschweig**Lines 27,625–738**

During the course of the year, after Ash Wednesday,² many wise counsellors and representatives from Germany and Livonia came together at the headquarters at the Marienburg with those delegated by the brother who had taken on the role of master, with the intention of electing a grand master to command the Teutonic Order. They conferred and Brother Luder von Braunschweig was elected unanimously to this honour with no dissenting voices. He was the fifteenth grand master since the beginning of the Order and the twenty-first master of Prussia. He held office for four years, six weeks and three days.³ This Grand Master Luder directed all his energy to the service of God, enhanced and adorned it greatly with books and robes and did whatever was right for the praise of God. He laid the foundation stone for the chapel which was built up in the castle and now stands in all its glory in praise of all the saints. He also laid down that the order's convents must all hold a daily early mass in praise of God and that it should be sung on the day before the feast of the Assumption, in praise of the ever Virgin Mary. This same year a fish of

¹ Job, 5, 6.

² 14 February 1331.

³ 1331–35. Luder von Braunschweig was related by marriage to Konrad von Thüringen and St Elisabeth. His election as grand master at a relatively late age was a response to the emergency caused by the murder of Werner von Orseln. His family background brought him the necessary status and respect to maintain the unity of the order, which was still suffering from the effects of the divisions under Karl von Trier. See Arnold (ed.), *Hochmeister*, pp. 65–70.

a type never before seen in Prussia swam boldly out of the sea, through the Lagoon and into the Pregel river. It swam up to the town of Königsberg. It was judged to be about twenty feet long. When it reached the bridge it turned round and swam back to the Lagoon. It was chased down by many people who tried to catch it, but without success, as it escaped them all. This was in the summer around the time of St Barnabas's Day.¹ After this a similar one, judging by its shape from the same species, was seen in the Nogat, caught, killed and taken to the Marienburg. This same summer there was a great onslaught on Poland. The marshal, Brother Dietrich von Altenburg, assembled a large army including around 200 brothers. He took the army into Poland, King Łokietek's land, and conquered about 18 fortresses, from small ones to the very best, and destroyed them all, reducing them to dust. Then he returned. Shortly afterwards he launched another campaign and he and his army captured about 20 castles and towns, according to my information, along with the surrounding villages. They burned them all down, from the first to the last, and it is impossible to quantify how much plunder they drove and carried off with them.

¹ 11 June.

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Index

- Acre 3, 12, 29, 30, 34, 35, 36, 167, 206, 207, 238, 241, 254
- Adalbert of Prague 2, 5, 14, 43
- Albert von Buxhövdén, bishop of Riga 2, 3, 39, 45
- Andrew II, king of Hungary 4, 40
- Anno von Sangershausen 167, 179, 181
- Balga (Veseloe) 26, 78, 80–81, 83–5, 90, 92, 117, 124, 125, 160–61, 197, 210, 221, 232, 260, 285
- brothers' lives 82, 275–6
- Balk, Hermann 64–5, 67, 74, 86
- Bart, Heinrich (Hermann) 36
- Barthia 68, 80, 84, 85, 125, 147, 148, 149, 160, 176, 178, 183, 210–11, 225, 257, 283, 286; *see also* Diwan
- defeat of 118–19
- revolt of 135–7
- Bernard of Clairvaux 7, 49
- Bohemia 74, 104, 123, 180, 231, 236, 272–3, 276, 277, 279, 288–9; *see also* Ottokar
- Bolesław, duke of Masovia 224, 227, 230
- Burchard von Schwanden 18, 196, 206–7
- Burzenland 3, 4, 36, 37
- Christburg (Dzierzgoń) 18, 27, 113–16, 19, 123, 124, 134, 159, 162–6, 189–92, 209, 245, 248, 275, 286
- Christian, bishop of Prussia 2, 43, 45, 47, 49, 65
- Christmemel (Skirsnemunė) 262, 262, 266, 267, 281, 287
- Conrad of Masovia 2, 3, 4, 43–8, 63, 67, 75
- crossbow 19, 104, 143, 144, 152
- crusaders 2, 8, 9, 12, 13, 18, 30, 39, 64, 65, 77, 144; *see also* pilgrims
- David of Gardinas 265, 271, 277, 279, 282–3, 285
- Dietrich von Altenburg 5, 6, 26, 268, 280, 285, 295
- Dietrich von Gattersleben 158
- Dietrich von Grüningen 120
- Diwan 135, 149, 163, 164–5, 174
- Dobrin (Dobrzyń)
- duchy of 46, 68, 193, 236–7, 278
- order of 3, 4, 43, 45, 46, 49, 65
- Durbe, battle of 131–2
- Elbing (Elbląg) 18, 34, 37, 78–80, 90, 92, 106, 107–8, 117, 125, 131, 138, 142, 152, 162, 164, 165, 166, 175, 176–7, 189–90, 209, 245, 286
- Engelsburg 82
- Frederick II, emperor 3, 4, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 46, 88, 105, 119, 123, 182, 274
- Friedrich von Pernstein, archbishop of Riga 12, 282
- Friedrich von Wildenberg 255, 276
- Galindia 68, 69–70, 85, 283
- Gediminas, grand duke of Lithuania 12, 222, 249, 265, 282, 283, 284, 291
- Gerhard von Malberg 90, 91
- Glappo 157, 159–60
- Gottfried von Hohenlohe 234, 243, 245
- Günther von Wüllersleben 90
- Hartmann von Grünbach 130
- Hartmann von Heldringen 10, 120–22, 183
- Heidenreich, bishop of Kulm 168, 172
- Heinrich von Hohenlohe 10, 90
- Heinrich von Liechtenstein 110–11
- Heinrich von Plötzkau 252, 258, 260, 270, 271
- Helmerich von Würzburg 139, 153
- Helwig von Goldbach 236

- Hermann von Salza 3–4, 7, 10, 36, 46, 64, 65, 74, 90, 120
- Honorius III 4, 33, 36, 37, 39
- Hungary 4, 37, 87–8, 180, 272, 275, 292
hunting 83–5
- Innocent III 2, 3, 31, 38, 39
- Junigeda 220, 221–2, 224–6, 229, 235, 263, 267, 270–71
- Karl von Trier 13, 261, 276, 294
- Königsberg (Kaliningrad) 5, 11, 26, 128, 138–40, 141–7, 152, 155, 157, 159–60, 196, 212, 216, 233, 249, 250, 251, 255, 267, 272, 280, 283, 295
building of 126–7
lives of brothers at 129–30, 213–15, 216
theft of horses from 230–31
- Konrad von Feuchtwangen 133, 195–6, 206, 231
- Konrad von Tierberg
the elder 159, 184, 189, 193, 195
the younger 158, 196, 200, 208
- Konrad von Thuringen (Thuringia) 37, 40, 119, 120–22, 183, 294
- Kruszwica (Kruschwitz), treaty of 4, 10, 43, 47, 111
- Kujavia 2, 4, 27, 43, 46, 47, 75, 97, 104, 111, 114, 222
- Kulm (Chełmno) 2, 18, 46, 63, 73, 75, 92, 96, 99, 105, 106, 109, 111, 114, 125, 139, 167, 172–4, 233, 291
building of 74
cult of St Barbara in 94–6, 106
miracle in 101
rebuilding at new site 113
shortage of husbands in 101
- Kulmerland 4, 18, 43, 44, 47, 64, 67, 68, 73, 75, 76, 91, 102–3, 108, 142, 153, 156, 166, 168–9, 171, 172, 191, 235, 237, 284, 289, 292
bishopric of 91; *see also* Heidenreich of Kulm
- Kulmsee (Chełmża) 169, 173, 174, 235, 244, 256
- Lenzenburg 134–5
- Lithuanians 2, 8, 9, 12, 68, 134, 152, 172, 188, 193–4, 204, 212–13, 217–18; *see also* David of Gardinas; Durbe, battle of; Gediminas; Vytenis
alliances with
Poland 230, 284–5
Prussians 185, 191–2, 197, 211
Riga 233–4, 282, 287
characteristics of 208, 253
religious practices of 71, 137, 218, 219, 272, 279
defeat of Sword Brothers 86
order's wars against 208–93
- Livonia 2, 18, 32, 36, 37, 39, 45, 64, 65, 71, 86, 91, 120, 123, 131, 132, 135, 145, 167, 179, 195–6, 207, 233–4, 235, 245, 277, 282, 283, 287, 291–2, 294
- Luder von Braunschweig 5, 6, 7, 26, 33, 83, 286, 294
authorship of life of St Barbara 14, 94
- Ludwig von Baldersheim 154
- Ludwig von Schüpf 235
- Maccabees, Books of the 7, 14, 27, 33, 34, 48, 49, 50, 52, 53, 54, 55, 59, 60, 65, 88, 89, 93, 96, 100, 103, 132, 136, 142, 178, 224, 257, 290
- Mangold von Sternberg 196, 197, 198, 200
- Marienburg (Malbork) 6, 12, 18, 19, 27, 104, 163, 164, 183, 220–21, 237, 246, 252, 256, 281, 293, 294, 295
building of 198
removal of headquarters to 254
- Martin von Golin 100, 170–71, 194–5, 212, 213
- Masovia 47, 68, 149, 172, 209, 282–3, 285; *see also* Conrad, duke of; Bolesław, duke of
- Meinhard von Querfurt 215, 217, 219, 221, 222, 223, 225, 226, 227
- Memel *see also* Christmemel
castle 188, 278, 287–8
river (mod. Neman, Niemen or Nemunas) 68, 186, 187, 208–9, 215, 217, 226, 228, 229, 232, 252, 260, 262–3, 271, 279

- Monte, Henry 135, 137, 143, 153, 159, 175
 Montfort 13, 167
- Nadrovica 68, 70, 127, 178, 183–6
 Natangia 68, 80, 84, 117, 119, 125, 128,
 136–7, 143, 149, 157, 158, 159–60,
 161, 176, 183, 190, 195, 229,
 230–31, 232, 235, 251, 255, 256,
 263, 264, 268, 279, 280; *see also*
 Monte, Henry
 advocate of 134–5
 Nicolaus von Jeroschin 5–7, 27, 214
- Otto, duke of Braunschweig (Brunswick)
 83–5
 Otto von Kerpen 36
 Ottokar of Bohemia 125–7, 154, 205
- Peter von Dusburg 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13,
 20, 25, 26, 32, 36, 38, 39, 71, 77,
 83, 90, 109, 132, 164, 187, 211,
 237, 286
 pilgrims 6, 8, 9, 18, 34, 65, 67, 74, 75,
 76, 86, 95, 110, 113, 115, 118,
 125, 136, 138, 140, 154, 158, 162,
 182, 240, 241, 249, 252, 267, 276,
 277, 279, 294; *see also* crusaders;
 Heinrich von Liechtenstein; Otto,
 duke of Braunschweig; Ottokar of
 Bohemia
 knighting of 249–50
 motivation of 288–9
 Pogesania 68, 73, 76, 125, 162, 163, 175,
 183, 190, 194, 209, 210–11
 conquest of 79–80
 revolt of 135, 176–7
 Poland 18, 37, 43, 44–7, 63, 64, 68, 69,
 73, 75, 76, 78, 82, 85, 86, 88, 93,
 97, 99, 104, 105, 106, 111, 113,
 119, 156, 158, 161, 163, 164, 168,
 169, 170, 172, 174, 176, 179, 183,
 188, 192, 193, 196, 198, 201, 202,
 210–11, 218–19, 222, 223–4, 227,
 231, 233, 236, 237, 251, 261, 265,
 265, 282, 283, 284–5, 286, 292,
 292, 295; *see also* Conrad, duke of
 Masovia; Władysław Łokietek
 Pomerania 2, 74, 76,
 Pomerelia 68, 201; *see also* Swantopelk
 Pomesania 65, 68, 73, 75, 76, 79, 80, 91,
 92, 113, 115, 119, 125, 131, 158,
 163–4, 165–8, 172, 176, 190, 206,
 265, 284
 bishopric of 156, 205
 Poppo von Osterna 8, 104, 105, 107, 108,
 167, 179, 183
 Prussians
 attacks on Poland 43–5, 47, 64
 defeat of 76, 78, 83–4, 139–40
 early history of 1–4
 order's treatment of converts 204–5
 previous attempts to subdue 49
 rebellions
 first rebellion 88–119; *see also*
 Swantopelk
 second rebellion 135–60, 160–90
 third rebellion 190–93
 fourth rebellion 211–31
 religion 70–72, 151
 superstitions 72–3
 wars against 67–207
- Ragnit (Neman) 26, 186–7, 212, 215–20,
 224, 225, 227–8, 229, 235, 244,
 252, 253, 254, 262, 263, 266,
 268–70, 280, 288, 291
 Rensen, battle of 99–100
 Riga 2, 3, 12, 39, 65, 233–4, 261, 282, 283,
 287, 291–3; *see also* Friedrich von
 Pernstein; Vytenis, grand duke of
 Lithuania
 Rus' 68, 174, 186, 199, 208, 232, 252, 258,
 282
- Sack, Konrad 235, 243–4, 248, 251
 St Elizabeth 39, 40, 41, 64, 87, 88, 119,
 120
 Sambia 68–9, 91, 123–4, 125–8, 132, 135,
 139–42, 144–6, 147, 152, 159,
 176, 184, 190, 197, 202–3, 211,
 212, 216, 226, 229, 230–31, 250,
 254, 255, 263, 264, 266, 268, 269,
 271–2, 280
 advocate of 72–3, 184, 186–7, 190,
 211, 250, 268, 272

- Scalovia 68, 127, 178, 185–6, 187–8, 189, 211, 215, 225, 229, 266
- ships 75, 78–9, 80, 103, 105, 107–8, 142, 143, 155, 156, 165, 186, 217, 229, 260–61, 262, 263, 266, 267, 270, 278
- siege engines 19, 96–7, 138–9, 140, 148, 149, 151, 152, 174, 220, 266, 290
- Siegfried von Feuchtwangen 245, 252, 254–5, 256, 261
- Skumantas 173, 174–5, 191, 198–9, 209
conversion of 199–200
death of 210
- Sudovia 68–9, 70, 99, 127, 148, 152, 171, 172, 173, 176, 178–9, 191–9, 200, 202–3, 204–5
conversion of nobleman 197–8
death of Sudovian warrior 173
- Surminas 217, 263
- Swantopelk, duke of Pomerelia 8, 10, 74, 75, 76, 113, 115, 116, 117
death of 155–6
negotiations with Teutonic Order 113–14
role in Prussian rebellions 88–98, 99–112,
successors 201–2
- Sword Brothers 2, 3, 10, 39, 45–6, 49, 65, 68, 183
integrated into the Teutonic Order 86
- Thorn (Toruń) 19, 63, 73, 74, 92, 99, 100, 105, 108, 111, 172–3, 213, 259
building of castle at 67
- Virgin Mary 7, 27, 32, 35, 109, 167, 198, 248, 255, 272, 284
appeals to 28, 252, 269, 280
devotion to 129–30, 210, 272
visions of 77, 101, 133, 134, 157, 292
- Vytenis, grand duke of Lithuania 12, 208, 222, 223–4, 233, 255, 256–9, 266
- Walpot, Heinrich 32, 35,
warfare *see also* crossbow; siege engines; ships; weather conditions
spiritual weaponry 51–9
theological justification of 49–51
- Warmia 68, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 119, 125, 135, 161, 176, 178, 183, 190, 236, 257; *see also* Glappo
advocate of 134–5, 283
bishopric of 91, 125, 161–2, 280, 283
- weather conditions
impact of cold and ice 76, 96, 126, 196, 209, 226, 248, 252, 277, 279, 294
- Wends 1–2, 275
- Werner von Orseln 5, 13, 25, 26, 27, 261, 263, 276, 281, 283, 286, 289, 294
assassination of 293
reforms of 286
- William of Modena 4, 91, 110, 179
- Woplauken, battle of 256–9
- Władysław Łokietek 222, 227, 284, 289, 292